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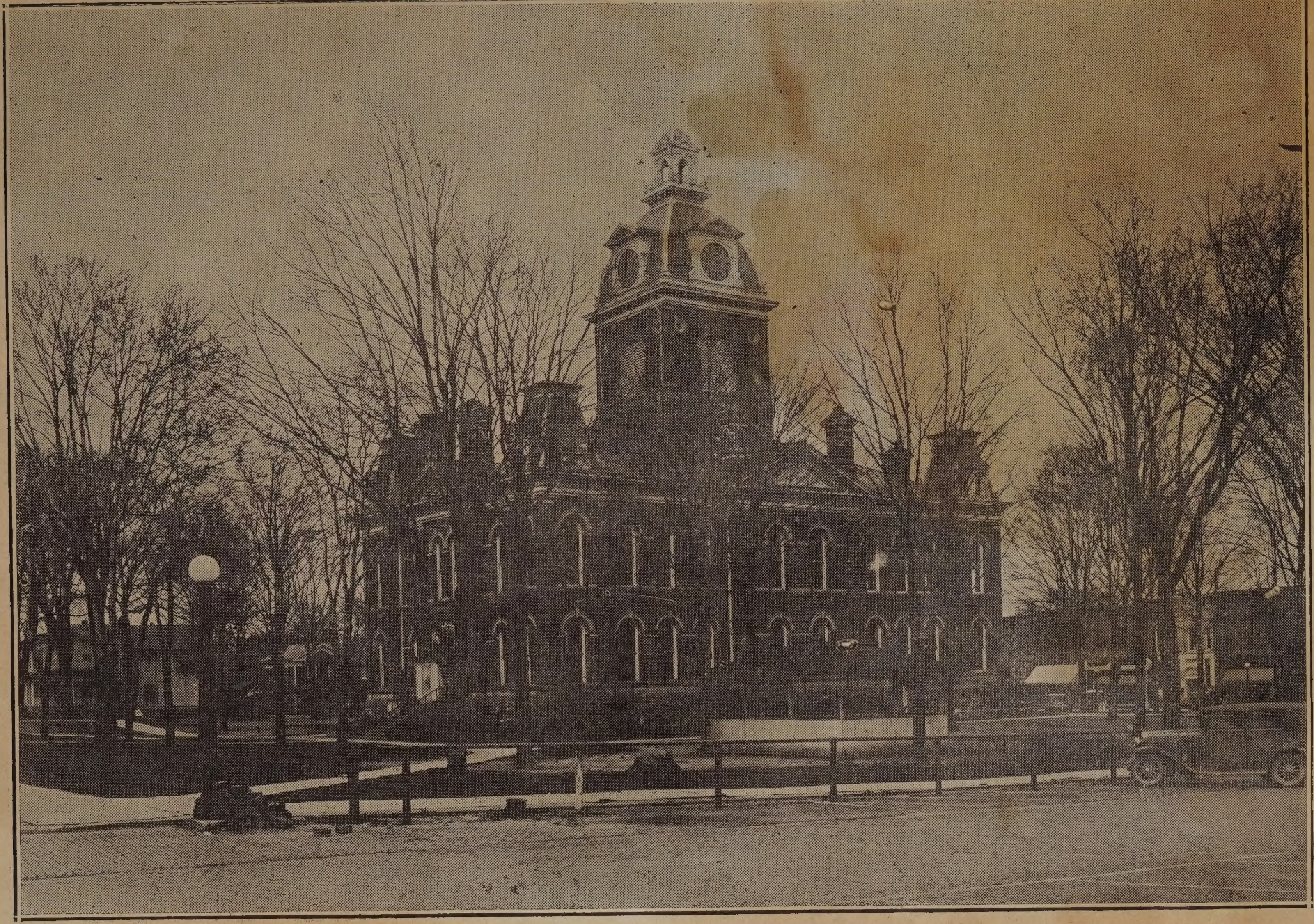

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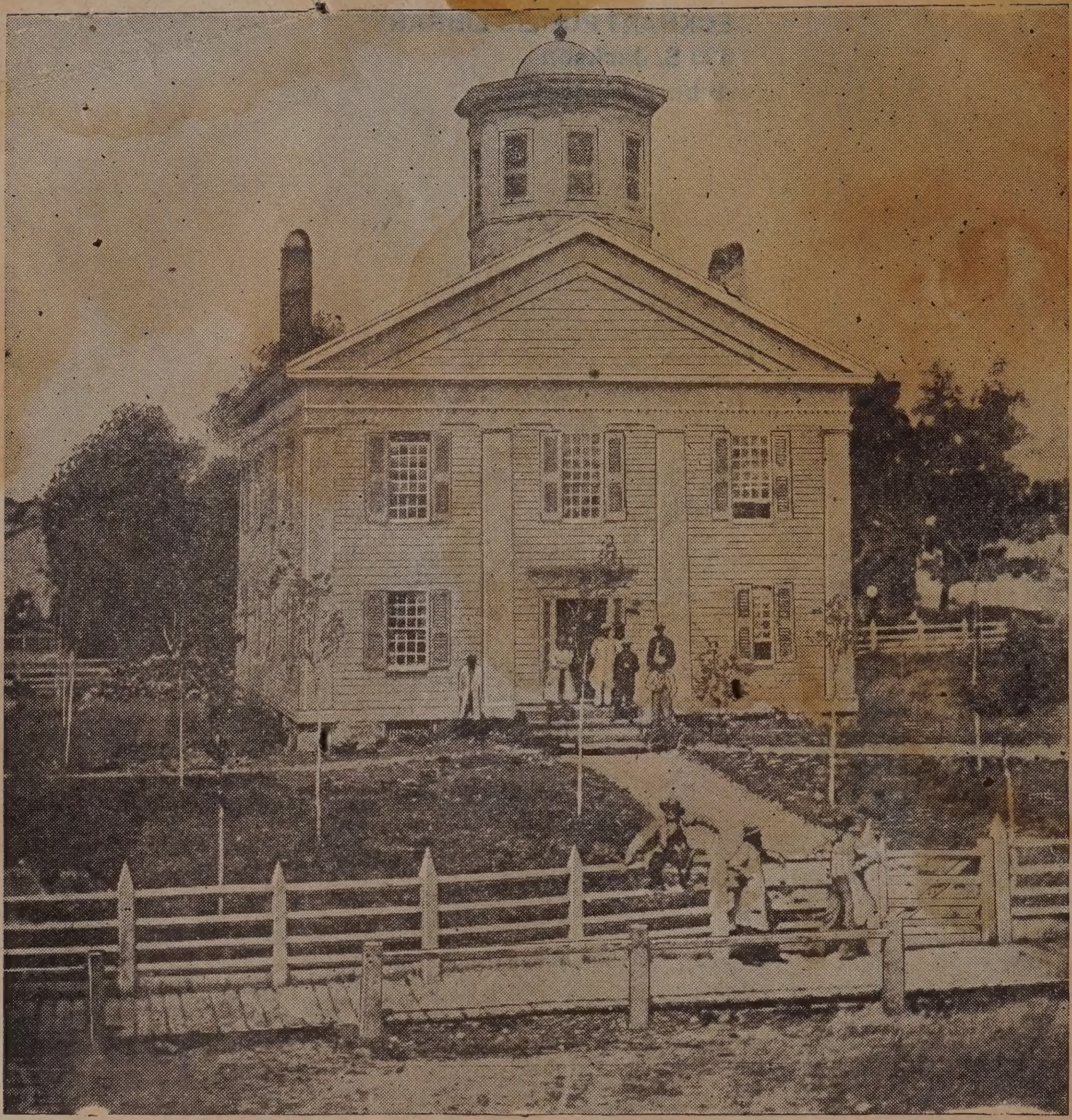
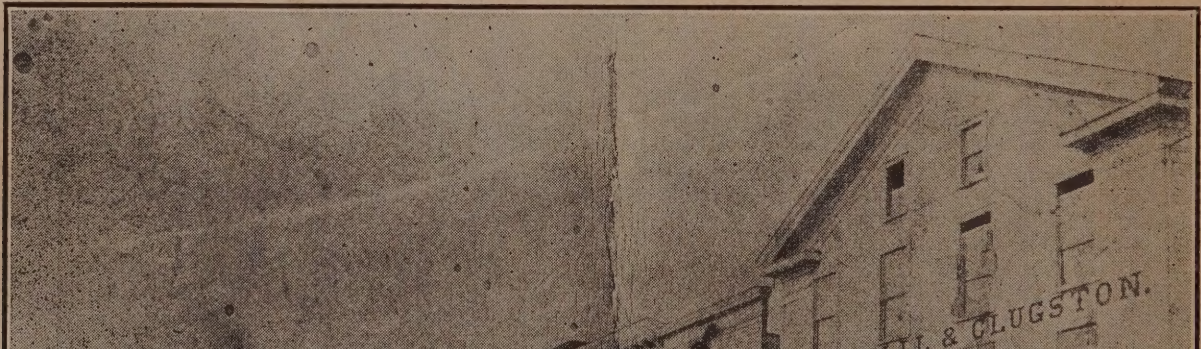


FIRST COURT HOUSE AT LAGRANGE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OLD VIEW OF DETROIT STREET—LAGRANGE

HISTORY OF
LAGRANGE COUNTY
INDIANA

Compiled largely from historical matter published in the LaGrange Standard and LaGrange News during LaGrange Centennial year 1936.

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This history was compiled and written by

ROSE MARJORIE WADDELL

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EARLY HISTORY OF COUNTY

Following are extracts from a county history. This portion of the history was written by Dr. John H. Rerick, editor of the LaGrange Standard for many years:

The history of the white man in northern Indiana opens at an Indian village at the head-waters of the Maumee river, Kekionga, now the city of Fort Wayne, about the year 1676. The old Indian tradition is that one of the missionaries from St. Joseph, on Lake Michigan, came to Kegionga at that time. The route of this Frenchman, probably, was up the St. Joseph river to points that are now White Pigeon or Three Rivers, and thence across the country to Kekionga. If this is correct, his most convenient route was through the territory that is now LaGrange county, and he was, without doubt, the first white man to tread its soil.

A French fort was erected at Kekionga in 1705, and the place was occupied as a military post successively by French, English and Americans until 1819, when the settlements had so increased and the Indians became so peaceable that the military was moved further west. It is not improbable that during this interval of over 150 years, white men, either missionaries, traders or hunters, wandered through the forests of LaGrange.

In the allotment of territory to the counties of the northeast, LaGrange county, being on the outside, was crowded to the Michigan state line. The county might have been much more extensive to the north had the Indiana boundary line been so located as to include territory in the same liberal manner in which Ohio arranged its boundaries. But this was not done, and it was a hard fight to keep what there is of the county, when, in 1834, Michigan demanded a rectification of her frontier. She asked a strip ten miles wide off of northern Indiana, but was satisfied by the cession to her of the northern peninsula, the Lake Superior region. The southern and middle townships were organized and named with the boundaries as fixed by the United States survey for congressional townships, but the upper tier, being cut down by the state boundary line to a width of only four and two-thirds miles, was divided into but three townships. Beginning at the northeast corner, these are Greenfield, Lima and VanBuren, the first and last nine miles in length, and the second, the richest in the county, but six miles in length. The middle tier of townships follow in the usual order of description from west to east, Newbury, Clay, Bloomfield, Springfield, and the southern tier, Milford, Johnson, Clearspring and Eden.

Thus the 384 square miles of territory are divided into 11 civil townships. The county takes its name from the country residence of the distinguished Frenchman so dear to Americans, La Fayette; and of the townships three are given personal names, three borrow a geographical title, four are named appropriately, and Eden belongs to the latter class, according to best authorities.

The surface of the county is nearly level, and for miles on the prairies of Lima and Greenfield it is perfectly so. In Bloomfield the rolling country reaches enough of an elevation at one place to receive the name of the "Knobs." In western Clay there is a beautiful mingling of lowlands and wooded hills, and away in the northwest a group of blue, white sand-ringed lakes lie among the bluffs which sink away into the prairies of Michigan.

The only considerable stream is Pigeon river, which flows through the county northwesterly, and receives most of the creeks which arise in its limits. The most important of these are Turkey creek in Milford and Springfield, Fly creek in the central part, and in the west Buck creek and Shipshewana, all of them inconsiderable and threatening not to "flow on forever." The south and southwest are drained into the Elkhart river, the main branch of which has its head-waters in Johnson township. The Little Elkhart rises in the marshes of the west. But all of these streams are tributaries of the St. Joseph, which carries their waters to Lake Michigan. In each township of the north another stream, Crooked creek, runs down into the county and back again into Michigan; in VanBuren township it forms the "Island."

From this it will be seen that the county lies wholly within the St.

Lawrence basin. A tributary of the Wabash, marking the edge of the Mississippi basin, rises within three miles of the southeast corner of the county, so that it is very near the water-shed of these two great systems. The altitude of the county is, on an average, over 900 feet above ocean level, and 400 feet above the level of Lake Erie. The altitude of the G. R. and I. railroad is 959 feet at Wolcottville, 973 feet at Valentine, 927 at LaGrange, 897 at Lima, and 889 at the state line. The altitude in the southeast is a little over 1,000 feet above the sea. In the northwest, on the low lands, the altitude is only 1,233 feet. It is seen that LaGrange is near the top. There is no higher land in northern Indiana except the "divides" of Noble and Steuben counties, which exceed it by but a few feet.

The lakes, of which there are 35, from two or three to 600 acres in area, are natural features of the county. Bloomfield township has only one lake, Fish lake. All of these lakes, if joined together, would only form a water area of about seven square miles. Many of these lakes are becoming depopulated of their finny habitants, and every disciple of gentle Izaak Walton should urge some measure to restore their former attractiveness in this respect.

LaGrange county is situated upon the great glacial drift, which covers to the depth of 100 feet or more the rocks of the Silurian period. They were formed at a very remote period in the earth's history, when the lake region was one vast inland gulf. A few years ago, a Mr. Mr. Boyd, while ditching in Hobbs' marsh a few miles northwest of LaGrange, discovered the well preserved skull of a mastadon. The bones were found about three feet beneath the surface. They were washed and taken to LaGrange where they created considerable excitement. One man offered $5 for them, another offered $10, and a commercial traveler offered $75, but the owner refused to sell at any price. He exhibited them at several towns and finally sold them for a small amount to parties in LaGrange, where they are now owned.

The resources of the county are exclusively in its rich soil. This, before the settler came, produced magnificent forests. Much valuable timber has been squandered in the county, but great destruction was inevitable in the early days, for farms had to be cleared, and there was no possible disposition of the timber except to roll it into the log heap and burn it. The forests have furnished the whole of the fuel of the county until within a very few years, when coal is just beginning to be introduced.

The Indians found in the county by the white settlers were of the Pottawatomie tribe, an inoffensive, quiet people, like all true Indians, much addicted to the chase. Their worst crime was the consumption of the "fire water" which the paleface supplied to them, and their capacity in this respect was almost unbounded. They occupied the St. Joseph country and Kankakee valley. One of their important villages was Mongoquinong, now called Lima, and Ontario, from which trails led south to Fort Wayne, upon which was afterward built the old Wayne road, north to the large Indian village once near the site of Mendon, Mich., westward to the St. Joseph mission, and another to Haw Patch.

This county is admirably adapted to agricultural pursuits. The LaGrange County Agricultural Society was organized Oct. 1, 1852, with Amos Davis, Andrew E. Durance, Robert McClaskey and C. B. Holmes as officers. The first fair was held Oct. 18, 1853, and the records show that $250 was appropriated. Spring fairs have been held in the spring of the last three years, but have not, with the exception of the first one, proved profitable to the society.

It has been established that northern Indiana, including this county, is rich in the remains of that mysterious people known as Mound Builders. Many of these mounds which were opened in the past by citizens of LaGrange county who were careless in their examinations have been made to yield up a portion of their secrets.

A number of years ago two mounds were opened in Milford township. A quantity of crumbling human bones was taken from one of them. In another was found a layer of ashes and charcoal extending over three square yards of ground. This was undoubtedly a mound where sacrifices were offered to the deity of the Mound Builders and where burial rites with fire were performed. In other mounds were found human bones, various trinkets and ornaments, stone axes, mauls, hammers, arrows, skinning instruments, ceremonial stones, weaving implements, charms, darts, mortars, celts, etc.

HISTORY OF TOWNSHIPS

AND TOWNS

LaGrange County Organized

Indiana was admitted into the union as the nineteenth state in 1816 and on February 2, 1932, by act of the Indiana legislature LaGrange county was created from what had been a portion of Elkhart county.

Divison into Townships

LaGrange county was divided into townships in 1832. Lima and Greenfield, the first townships, were divided May 14, 1832. The others, in their order, follow: Eden, Nov. 5, 1832; Springfield, May 4, 1834; Bloomfield, May 5, 1835; VanBuren, Jan. 8, 1837; Newbury, Clearspring and Johnson, March 6, 1837; Milford, Sept. 5, 1837, and Clay, the last one, Sept. 4, 1838.

The winding Indian trails were supplanted by the roads built for wagons. The stage line came a little later, then the plank road, and finally the improved gravel roads, and now the county is traversed by wide concrete highways and several railroads.

As traveling conditions became better white settlements began to spring into existence over the county. It has been said in another chapter that Lima and Ontario were the first settlements.

BLOOMFIELD TOWNSHIP

David Hanson came to Bloomfield township in 1833 and was its first white settler. Three years later 30 families were living in the township. They were Samuel Carl, Daniel Carl, William Hern, Jr., Moses Newell Hill, Caleb Jewett, Hart Hazen, Levi Green, Mr. Townsend, Peter L. Mason, Solomon Scidmore, Alanson N. Dewey, Amasa Durand, Ira Hays, Washington Adams, Joseph Davidson, Selah P. Benham, John Davidson, Almon Lawrence, Curtis Harding, Palmer Grannis, Jacob D. Groves, Rev. Thomas B. Connelly, Joseph Welch, George D. Carl, George Cooper, William Hern, Sr., Moses J. Hill, Elihu Champlin, Joseph Richards and Thomas Newell.

Most of these families came from New York, Ohio, Virginia and Maryland, and most of them later moved farther west.

In 1835 the first sawmill was erected by Daniel Harding. Some time later Ira W. Brown built a steam sawmill on his farm, and Jeremiah Outcalt built another on his farm. Joseph Welch was the first cabinet maker in the township, and Levi Green was the first carpenter. John Hardy was the first blacksmith, Caleb Jewett the first shoemaker, and Moses J. Hill the first physician.

Bloomfield was organized into a civil township in June, 1835, and an election meeting was held at the home of Mr. Hill. Mr. Hill was elected justice; William Hern was appointed supervisor. The first general election was held on April 3, 1837, at the home of Abel Mattoon. Solomon Scidmore, Horace Bartine and John Davidson were the election board. Jacob D. Groves was elected justice of peace; George D. Carl, constable; William Hern, Jr., inspector of elections; E. W. Weir and Daniel Carl, overseers of the poor; Joseph Davidson and Alanson N. Dewey, fence viewers; John Davidson, Hiram Babcock and Marvin J. Hill, supervisors.

William C. Tillman employed a surveyor, in May of 1836, to lay out 24 blocks of 24 lots each, and nine blocks of 12 lots each on the north half of section one in the township, and named the village Burlington. This was the first village of Bloomfield township. The village of Bloomfield, or Hill's Corners, was laid out in the east part of the township on Sept. 14, 1836.

The village is now known as Plato.

The township's first church was organized in 1935 by Rev. Thomas B. Connelly, at Bethel. Rev. and Mrs. Connelly, Mr. and Mrs. Jacob D. Groves, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Welch and Mary Groves constituted the entire church membership. The Bethel chapel was built in 1852, and was used for several years.

LaGrange, the Town

LaGrange, the town, was one hundred years old June 18, 1936. In its century of existence the Indian trails have disappeared and improved streets have taken their place; woods have been supplanted by modern homes and lawns; a transcontinental highway and a state highway intersect the town; and numerous transcontinental airplanes pass over LaGrange daily.

The LaGrange of today is in sharp contrast to the LaGrange of 100 years ago.

LaGrange has one of the most modern schools in the state. Its beautiful courthouse park attracts much attention. An athletic park at the east edge of town affords a play ground for both the juvenile and his parent. A completely equipped hospital owned by Dr. Harry G. Erwin, the beautiful Carnegie library, the equally attractive city hall, the several churches, the gymnasium, a substantial bank, the American Legion home, the Masonic temple, two weekly newspapers, modern hotels, a milk condensery, postoffice, and a candy factory are only a few of the attractions of the LaGrange of 1936.

LaGrange is located in the center of the county. The land on which the original plat was executed was purchased from the government at the land office in Fort Wayne in 1835 by George F. Whittaker and Theodore Craft. Later Joshua T. Hobbs bought an interest, and so became one of the first proprietors of the town's site.

Reuben J. Dawson, William F. Beavers, George F. Whittaker and James McConnell platted the town June 18, 1836. The town was laid off into lots, each 66x132 feet in size. A section measuring 132x280 feet was laid out for a public square. The streets were 66 feet wide and the alleys, 16½ feet wide.

The streets were laid so that they would intersect at right angles, and were named Mountain, High, Detroit, Poplar, Walnut, Sycamore and Canal, running north and south, and Lake, Steuben, Factory, Michigan, Spring, Lafayette and Wayne, running east and west. Detroit was the main street of the business section and has held this honor for the century. State Road 9 now runs through LaGrange along Detroit street, the full length of the town.

The site was covered with a dense forest, underbrush, prickly ash, briars, shrubbery, snakes, and insects. One of the first acts, which later proved to be unwise, was the cutting down of the trees on the plat for the public square. Later trees had to be planted there in order to give shade and beauty to the park. Many years of hard labor were required to fill in the swamp at the south and east of the public square.

Isaac P. Grannis and Thomas Clark built the first two houses in LaGrange. Both were log cabins. William Wigton built the first frame structure, a warehouse, on the northeast corner of Detroit and Spring streets. The Farmers State Bank now stands on the corner. C. B. Holmes soon took over the warehouse for a general store, and the first postoffice was opened in the building, Mr. Holmes being the first postmaster.

Other hardy pioneer families soon came and before long the village was growing rapidly. In 1843 Herman B. McCoy and William S. Boyd opened a mercantile business in the old Boyd building. James B. Caldwell and Mr. McCoy started a tannery in 1846, and manufactured harnesses. D. Martin, in 1844, constructed a saw mill, and in 1856 William S. Boyd and John Starr built a flour mill.

The first drug store was opened by Rensselaer Rheubottom in 1852. Dr. John H. Rerick and Dr. Howard M. Betts entered in the drug business in 1860. Perry S. Hemminger opened the town's first tin shop in 1855 and Jones & Hemminger opened the first hardware store in 1857. The first grocer was C. B. Holmes. Andrew Emminger opened a chair factory in 1844. In 1852 the first lodge was organized, and 1872 saw the opening of the first bank.

LaGrange was incorporated as a town in 1855, with Andrew Emminger, William C. Kennedy, William Rheubottom and Rensselaer Rheubottom as the first board of trustees. The first officers were: Rensselaer Rheubottom, president; Charles B. Holmes, clerk; Andrew Ellison, marshal; Caleb Strang, treasurer, and John B. Case, assessor.

An electric lighting system was installed in LaGrange in 1888, which used arc lights. In 1893 the town was provided with a waterworks system which consisted of six wells down to a depth of from 90 to 140 feet.

Statistics show that the population of LaGrange grew, from 1836 to 1880, from two families to nearly 1,400 persons. The latest census shows a few less than 1,700 persons.

The members of the present town board are: Ralph W. Shultz, president; Lehman Wemple, Wilbert Seybert, Charles M. Roderick and Lester Norris. Gerald W. Fisher is the city attorney, and J. A. Hostetler is clerk-treasurer.

The county officials are: board of commissioners, Jesse D. Schaeffer, Harley E. Longcor and Ray L.

Schermerhorn; clerk, Donald R. Beaty; auditor, Bela R. Woodworth; treasurer, B. Frank Greenawalt; surveyor, Harold E. Murray; recorder, Fred M. Hostetler; sheriff, Noah E. Slabaugh; school superintendent, Charles F. Kohlmeyer; attendance officer, Mildred Atwater; public health nurse, Dessie E. Griggs; welfare chairman and probation officer, Mrs. Glenn W. Knauss; health officer, Dr. Harry G. Erwin; coroner, Dr. Clarence H. Schulz; attorney, LeRoy K. Schultess.

Harry R. Groat is the postmaster, Kathryn Smith, public librarian, and Zaner R. LeMaster, city school superintendent.

The women and girls of LaGrange find an outlet for their social and educational inclinations in the dozen or more clubs and lodges. The men find pride in a Chamber of Commerce and an Exchange club, along with several other organizations including lodges, the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Boy Scout and Girl Scout organizations provide a similar solution for the boys and girls.

The LaGrange of 1936 is the typical American town, always striving to improve itself and to add further advantages and attractions for its people.

Churches of LaGrange

Methodist Episcopal

Rev. William J. Forbes organized the Methodist Episcopal church in LaGrange in 1843, with the assistance of James Packer and his wife, Esther, Isaac P. Grannis and his wife, Rhoda, Amasa Durand and his wife, Hannah, Robert J. McClaskey and several others.

In 1856 a frame church was built at a cost of $3,000, and with a seating capacity of 500. The present church, a large red brick building, was constructed in 1889 and cost $16,000.

The Sunday school was organized in 1853.

The pastor today is Rev. Benjamin Kendall.

Presbyterian

While the first Presbyterian church in the county was organized at Lima in 1832, one was organized here in 1843-44 by Rev. Benjamin Ogden of Three Rivers, Mich. The first members were Mr. and Mrs. Francis M. Price, Mr. and Mrs. William S. Boyd, Robert Cummings, and Harmon B. McCoy. Messrs. Boyd and Price were the first elders.

A larger brick church was built in 1853 at a cost of $2,000, and in 1882, in order to accommodate the increasing congregation, the present church, a large red brick edifice, was built. It cost $20,000.

Rev. David C. Truesdale, who served as pastor here more than 20 years ago, was called to the pastorate again a few months ago.

Mt. Zion Lutheran

Rev. George Walker organized the Mt. Zion Lutheran church in LaGrange Oct. 12, 1854, and the charter members were Mr. and Mrs. Michael Hoff, Benjamin F. Hills, Mr. and Mrs. William Sigler and Mr. and Mrs. Reuben Trexler.

The first building soon was inadequate, so in 1861-62 a larger frame church was built, costing $1,000. In 1889 the congregation bought the old Methodist Episcopal edifice and remodeled it into the handsome church that is still used today. The remodeling cost around $10,000.

Rev. John S. Hoenstine, the present pastor, has been here for several years.

Church of God

The Church of God edifice was built in LaGrange in 1921, at a cost of $6,500. Prayer meetings had been held the year before, and the interest was so keen that the group planned the building of a church.

The new church was dedicated in June of 1922 and Rev. Samuel F. Bathauer was the first pastor. He was succeeded by Rev. Walter Schrock, who, in turn, was succeeded by Rev. Charles W. Smith.

Rev. Lawrence J. Beaver, the present pastor, came six years ago. The membership of the church is around 80, and the attendance usually is 120 or 130.

Catholic Church

Several years ago the need for a Catholic church in the community became apparent, so a large room in the Bir hotel was used for the services. Recently the old Cummings property on US-20 at the west edge of town was purchased by Henry S. Bir, who has remodeled it for use as a Catholic church.

The attendance has increased noticeably, and much interest is shown in the growth of the Catholic church in LaGrange.

Seventh Day Adventist

Efforts have been made in recent years to start a Seventh Day Adventist church in LaGrange. Those who were interested bought a property on South Poplar street which they converted into a church, with the parsonage adjacent to it. While the congregation never has been large, those who belong to the church are faithful and diligent, and believe that some day the church wil create a greater interest in the community.

The Athletic Park

The athletic park in LaGrange is one of the best and most completely equipped parks in northern Indiana. This is due largely to the efforts and labor of Robert Pierce, the coach on the LaGrange school faculty.

Mr. Pierce, assisted by other interested persons, has devoted much of his time to the improvement and development of the park.

Baseball diamonds, tennis, volley ball, croquet and handball courts, an archery range, running track, and a football field are being constructed in the large park.

Regular hours for play, supervised by Coach Pierce, give the boys and girls of the community a safe place for games and an opportunity to develop their skill in many lines.

Banks

A few years ago LaGrange had three banks, the National, the State and the LaGrange County Trust Company.

Like all communities, LaGrange was affected by the depression, and all of the banks were closed for liquidation.

Today LaGrange has one bank, The Farmers State Bank, which was opened in November 1934. Its total assets now are $626,023.92.

The officers are: Minor S. Perkins, president; Jada Perkins, vice-president, and James E. Zook, cashier.

New Water System

In 1935 the LaGrange waterworks system was modernized with the installation of two electric pumps, in one 12-inch and one 15-inch well, and the construction of a 125,000 gallon capacity elevated water storage tank and well houses over the wells. The pumps are controlled automatically and assure the town of an abundance of pure water. The water system is administered by a water board and Herman H. Smith is the superintendent.

JOHNSON TOWNSHIP

In June, 1834, Peter Lampson and Nelson Nichols came to the territory that is now Johnson township, and entered their claims to land. The third settler was John Adams, who came in November of the same year. Other settlers who came afterward were Levi Wright, Samuel Benham, Peter Tillipaugh, George Walker, John Hughes, Jeremiah Bidwell, Robert Meeker, John Doty, Robert Latta, Thomas Oliver, Philo Taylor, George Wolcott, Henry Nichols, Almon White, Hiram Gardner, James Campbell, John Benham, Simeon Cain, John and Abráham Rowe, O. P. Grannis, Allen Brundage, William Dickinson, William Hardin, Thomas Koon, Nathan Sherman, Abraham Eiman, Charles Doty, Aaron Hill, John Parker, Abraham Brayton, George Dickinson, Samuel Barnes, Ozias Wright, Levi Wildman, Thomas Higgins, Mr. Olin, James Oliver, Selah Benham, Joseph Caswell, Anthony Dickinson, James Dunbar, Erastus Disbrow, William R. Hill, Samuel Koon, Henry Miller, Hiram Meeker, William McCollum, Ira Nichols, George Noble, James Parker, Ross Romine, Phineas Tillotson, William Taylor, John Vaughan, Alexander Vaughan, and Isaac Wright. All came before 1840.

The township was laid out in March of 1837, and the first election was held in April at James Campbell's home. Mr. Campbell was elected justice of the peace, but the names of the other officers have been lost.

The first trading house in this territory was built a year or two before the township was laid out. In July, 1836, a dam and a sawmill were built.

The territory was nothing but a wilderness when the first white men came, and a large Indian village existed on the west bank of Oliver lake. The Indians showed a ready willingness to mingle with the white people, and in fact they were too willing, for they often robbed the homes and made themselves otherwise unwelcome.

In 1847 the first store in the township was opened at Wright's Corners by Vaughan and Wildman.

When George Wolcott came to this township, in 1837, he immediately built a sawmill, and thus gave employment to a large number of men. In 1839 he built a store, and carried many thousands of dollars worth of stock. The second store was opened in 1849 by L. L. Wildman. Other early merchants in this community were McMeans & Weston, Wilbur & Hitchcock, Taylor & Wildman, Alvin Hamlin, Anthony Watson, E. Bunce, who built a foundry in 1855, Paulus & Ewing, Higgins & Barnes, a Mr. Hutchins, Mr. Cochran, Ed Harding, Paulus & Nichols, Paulus & Yeager, and a Mr. Haley.

Wolcottville

Wolcottville was settled in 1832, according to facts derived from a history of the community written by the late Maude Dickinson Gallup of Wolcottville, a former teacher in the LaGrange public schools.

The following excerpts are taken from Mrs. Gallup's articles:

The first settlement of the community was made one hundred years ago at the Tamarack three and one half miles east of here by two French traders sent out by a trading house of Fort Wayne. A small cabin was made at first, later a double log building of tamarack poles called the Tamarack House. Later, a dam and sawmill were built just south of the Tamarack House, a store and grist mill opened and the first village of this community came into existence.

In 1856 this property was purchased by O. P. Grannis, who owned it many years.

Following these French traders the first two white settlers in Johnson township were Peter Lamson and Nelson Nichols, who came to Wolcottville in June 1834. They came on foot from Medina County, Ohio, to the northern part of Indiana, then a tangled wilderness full of wild animals and almost wild men and women, some half breeds of French and Indian descent. People of this kind had quite a large temporary village on the west bank of Oliver lake and from there roamed the country round about.

Having heard of the Pottawatomi Reservation, Lamson and Nichols turned their footsteps southward and selected their land in what is now Johnson township.

On foot they traveled to Fort Wayne to enter their land, found the land office closed, and were forced to make a second trip to make certain their land.

In the meantime, Mr. Adams had selected land near Adam's lake and so made the first entry in Johnson township. Nelson Nichols and Peter Lamson made the second and third entries. Nelson Nichols made the first entry in Orange township.

They went back to Ohio returning in November with Mr. Lamson's family. Reaching Wright's Corners in December 1834, they found Henry Nichols and family. They found an old deserted house and all lived there until they could get their cabins built. Mr. Lamson built his house near the present school house in Wolcottville. Henry Nichols built his one-half mile west of that. Mr. Wright came to Wright's Corners in 1835.

The next settler was George Nichols. Henry Nichols' daughter, Margaret, born January 1836 was the first white child born in the community. Fernando, son of Nelson and Keziah Nichols, born January 1838, was the first male child born in the community. The first couple married were Jonathan Law and Alma Kent, married in August, 1837.

In 1836 Philo and William Taylor arrived from Ohio. William's land was in Orange Township, now the Bidwell farm. Philo's in Johnson township, a part of it still in the Taylor family owned by Mr. and Mrs. Ed Grossman. Mr. Taylor built the first barn in the community and Nelson Nichols built the second.

Other settlers followed soon and fast. Among them were Ebenezer and Stephen Pierce, David Munger, Almon White, William and George Dickinson, Robert Meeker, Samuel Barnes, Ozias Wright and James McQueen. Many of these men came, took up their land, and returned to Ohio or New York for their families.

So many moved in in 1837 that the men had to go to Michigan and the older settlements to get grain and provisions for people and for cattle. Wheat was $1.50 per bushel, pork 18 cents per pound and other things in proportion.

In 1837, George Wolcott, a native of Connecticut, arrived in Wolcottville and put up a log cabin on the site of the present Wolcott House. His family accompanied by Levi Wildman, Sr., came in the fall of 1837.

For a great many years Mr. Wolcott was the leading spirit of Wolcottville. He was a very energetic, hard working, generous man, but burdened with a high spirit and proud.

He had considerable means at his command and upon his arrival began industrial enterprises on an extensive scale. He immediately built a saw mill that soon became known far and near. The building stood just below the present hammermill. The mill was fed by a race half a mile long which Mr. Wolcott dug himself. The saw mill was completed in 1838 and a year or two later a small set of buhrs was placed in an addition to it. The buhrs were obtained of Mr. O. P. Grannis of the Tamarack mill. In 1841 that part of the building occupied by the sawing machinery was vacated and a new saw mill was erected some 12 or 15 rods farther up the race, the old room being fitted up for carding wool. In 1848 Mr. Wolcott erected a grist mill on the present site.

About this time Mr. Wolcott had as many as twenty workmen in his employ. He had quite a large farm under cultivation, was engaged in milling, sawing, blacksmithing, merchandising, coopering and manufacturing potash, in all, seven occupations.

He started the first store in 1839 and placed in the new store room which he built where the present Tuck building stands, goods to the amount of $1,000, and subsequently greatly increased his stock. In eight or ten years his stock was increased to $7,000.

It was quite right that Wolcottville be called first Wolcott's Mills. Wolcottville was laid out in 33 lots on land entered by Peter Lamson and recorded in 1848 and called Wolcottville from that time.

In about 1839 Mr. Sabin built a dam and a saw mill on the river a short distance west of Wolcottville, Just east of the O. L. Lampman place. Later he sold out to Dr. Leonard Barber, who operated it successfully for a number of years. It then went to Andrew Pouty, thence to Aaron Kimmel, thence to Horace Hamlin.

In 1851 Mr. Wolcott disposed of his various industrial pursuits to McMeans and Weston, who later sold to Wilbur and Hitchcock, who conducted the mills until 1860. They were then purchased by Philo Taylor and Levi Wildman. These two men and their sons have done much for the advancement of Wolcottville.

L. L. Wildman, previously in business at Wright's Corners, opened the second store in Wolcottville in 1849. He began with $3,000 worth of property and continued merchandising, associating with him at different times Wm. Taylor and others. Considerable money was made during the war by these men.

Following the war Taylor and Woodruff were merchants for a number of years, Mr. Wildman entering the hardware business. In 1873 he began a private banking system.

Among the early industries in Wolcottville were a rake factory operated by Alvin Hamlin, a tannery by Anthony Watson, a foundry where plows, scrapers, kettles, machine castings, etc., were made by E. Buner, which passed through the hands of Paulus and Ewing, Higgins and Harness, Huchins and Cochran and Harding. Moon and Rogers were proprietors of a carriage factory, Paulus and Yeager of a planing mill, and Mr. Haley of a cooper shop.

The post office was established in 1848. It was at first in the store building owned by Philo Taylor, later occupied by Dickinson and Tuck. Philo Taylor was the first postmaster and George Wolcott the second. Mail at first came but once a week. Daily mail came in 1863.

Dr. Leonard Barber was the first practicing physician to administer to the bodily ills of the people of Wolcottville. At first he resided at Northport but later built his home on the hill where the old building stands, still and neglected, perhaps the oldest in Wolcottville.

The first school house of the vicinity was probably at Wright's Corners as early as 1836, a log schoolhouse used until 1848.

In 1838 Mr. Burnes, who lived a short distance north of Wolcottville, built a log barn where his daughter taught a summer school. In 1839 a log schoolhouse was built one-half mile north of Wolcottville probably where the Affolder home is and Ovias Wright was the first teacher. In 1838 a log schoolhouse was built on the corner south of Wolcottville and Levi Wildman, Jr., was the first teacher then. He received $10 a month and boarded around. In 1841 a log school house was built two miles north of Wolcottville and the Dickinson school was first taught by Lucretia Crandall, later Mrs. Hiram Gardner. Her salary was 10 shillings a week.

In 1841 the first frame school house was built in the neighborhood one-half mile north of town. Two or three years afterward it burned to the ground and school for awhile was held in Mr. Wolcott's unfinished parlor.

The Wolcottville Seminary together with the Collegiate Institute at Ontario was among the important early schools of the county.

On the fifth of October, 1870, S. D. Crane entered the Wolcottville Seminary as principal. He held his position two years. He added a Normal School and a Lyceum well patronized and worthwhile.

In the fall of 1872, Mr. Holbrook

took charge of the school and conducted it until the winter term when it was removed to the new school building on the present site of the Wolcottville High School. After this building burned the schools of Wolcottville were carried on, one in Noble and one in LaGrange county but the high school has continued to be held on the LaGrange county side.

The Noble county school house still stands across the Wabash railroad tracks. The seminary has been moved away. In its place on the hill a beautiful modern home stands sentinel overlooking Wolcott's town. An up to date modern school building, the pride of Wolcottville, stands where the old building, which burned October 7, 1897, stood.

The first religious services in Wolcottville were conducted by Rev. T. Conley, a Methodist circuit rider of LaGrange, in the home of Philo Taylor, who invited his neighbors and friends for the meeting. As the congregation increased the place of meeting was changed to Mr. Taylor's barn, and, when the weather permitted, to the open air.

Later the Methodist people worshipped in a house belonging to Ozias Wright near the Barber residence. They organized into a class in 1839 with five members, Alford Witter and wife, Robert Meeker, Sally Lamson, and Keziah Nichols.

The Baptist church was organized in June 1837, with nine members. In the unfinished parlor of Mr. Wolcott's house, Samuel Barnes and wife, Almon White and wife, Hiram Perkins and wife, D. A. Munger, Julia Pierce and Nancy Dickinson met one evening and planned the Baptist church of Wolcottville. At first it was a mission station where several different ministers came to preach. They first worshipped in a blacksmith shop, later building a log church one-half mile south of Wolcottville. In 1851 the first Baptist church was built where the present church stands. The present Baptist church was completed in 1878, the old one moved across the street, now the Grossman store, I believe. Elder Caleb H. Blanchard, the second pastor of the church, served these people for forty years. Beloved and loving, he left his people his home for a parsonage, an endowment fund, and the Blanchard lot in the new cemetery.

The Evangelical church was organized about 1850 and held the first meetings of its people in a little church on Dutch street. The church was located across from the Frank Myers home where the few graves are seen near the roadside.

The church building in town was erected in about 1882 in the pleasant little grove on South Main street and is called the Grove Evangelical church. Its people have always been faithful to the religious convictions of the early pioneers. Its members as a rule have always been active in every movement for good in the community.

On April 1, 1874, J. R. Rheubottom started at Wolcottville the first newspaper, the Wolcottville Register, and ran it until November 2, 1875, when he sold half interest to S. D. Crane. When two years old this paper had a circulation of nearly 900 copies.

In 1870, the G. R. & I. railroad was completed. This was the herald of a new era for Wolcottville. In seven years the town had doubled itself in population.

Had Mr. Wright of Wright's Corners not been adverse to the establishment of a small village at the corners, had he sold lots for shops, as he was begged to do, had he encouraged or cooperated with the officials of the G. R. & I., that road today perhaps would be running east of Wolcottville through Woodruff, but Mr. Wright's obstanacy was fortunate for Wolcottville which has had the benefit of the railroad for years.

The Wabash had a royal welcome at Wolcottville and great things were expected in the town because of this railroad.

The first train passed through Wolcottville over the Wabash, April 20, 1893. Wolcottville is 136 miles from Detroit, 136 miles from Chicago.

Wolcottville's greatest source of amusement, entertainment and enlightment in the rather early days was Island Park Assembly. The proximity of Island Park to Wolcottville was a constant source of delight to old and young alike. With regret we saw the chautauqua programs there discontinued.

A beauty spot in Wolcottville and a place of pride pointed out to our guests, is the Taylor Park, given as a memorial for the early Taylor family as an expression of love from the present generation to the town of Wolcottville.

(The above article was written by Mrs. Gallup on the ossasion of Wolcottville's 100 anniversary, in 1932.)

Village of Valentine

Valentine, in Johnson township, was platted in April of 1879, on the G. R. & I. railroad. Five years before the village was platted William Painter opened the Valentine House. Sergeant and Clugston built a sawmill there in 1870, and this was the original starting of the settlement.

Mr. Painter became postmaster in November, 1873.

Today Valentine has one store, the VanDrew general store, and the new routing of State Road 9 places the village on the highway as well as on the railroad, now the Pennsylvania instead of the G. R. & I.

Woodruff

The village of Woodruff, northeast of Wolcottville, has only a store, church and school, but at the time of her birth a postoffice was located there, and several stores were conducted. Woodruff sprang up near the settlement of Wright's Corners, owned by Levi Wright. Mr. Wright opposed any settlement near his land, but nevertheless the hamlet of Woodruff finally came into existence.

VANBUREN TOWNSHIP

The year of 1837 saw the birth of the county's second village, VanBuren. The village was named for President-Elect Martin VanBuren.

A few years later the name of the village was changed to Scott. A postoffice was opened here in 1836. The land originally was platted by Philemon Martin, and later an addition was platted by Nicholas Sixbey.

The population of Scott today is about 100. It has an excellent township school, store, mill, light plant and is a social center.

The village called Seybert, or Seybert Station, was laid out in 1888 when the Goshen-Sturgis railroad was built through the territory. Charles Seybert, the storekeeper there at that time, was honored by having the settlement named for him.

The village has remained small, but is an active community and supports a church and a community hall. One general store cares for the needs of Seybert folk.

During the year 1837 the commissioners ordered a portion of the land set off for VanBuren township. An election meeting was held in April at the home of Seldon Martin. John Olney had been appointed inspector, and 30 or more residents attended the meeting. A Mr. Pierce was elected justice of the peace, but as the records of the meeting were lost many years ago, it is not known who were the other officers of this new township.

Jesse Huntsman and Nehemiah Coldren were the first settlers, coming to the territory in 1829, eight years before VanBuren's boundary lines existed. The land office in Fort Wayne offered the land for sale in 1831, and among the hardy pioneers who came to settle were Nathanial Callahan, Ami Lawrence and Asa Olney. John Cook, an Englishman, came two years later, but died after several months. His death was the first among the pioneers.

The first road, the Defiance and White Pigeon road, was surveyed through VanBuren township in 1838, and the second road, known as the Vistula, was built a little later. The Vistula was intended to connect Toledo and South Bend. The surveyors and viewers were Judge Newton, Judge Seeley, John Kromer, and Thomas P. Bulla. John Belote built his home along the line of the Vistula road before it was surveyed. He was one of the first trustees of the township. Other early settlers were Elmer Belote, James S. Belote, William Tharp, Jacob Butt, Nicholas Sidener, Samuel Sidener, Samuel Berry, George Turnbull, Ami Whitney and Edward Robbins, and a Mr. Nobles, Francis Rhoads, Isaac Buckley, Eppah Robbins, John Fowler, Peter L. Keightley, John Moak, Robert and John Marshall, George W. Ferguson, Garel Osborne, John Sallier, Widow Dodd, William Mack and William Davis.

A cemetery, called Belote graveyard, was laid out in 1836, and another, called the Mack settlement, was laid out in the west part of the township near the county line.

The population of the township increased rapidly. A group of Pennsylvanians started a settlement in 1850, in the southwest corner of VanBuren, and called it New Pennsylvania. The schoolhouse there used this name for many years. As the population increased it became necessary to organize. Among the early justices of the peace were Alfred Martin, Charles Dwight, David Elmore, H. B. Oberstrander, Josiah B. Cook, C. W. Wilson, John W. McIntyre, C. W. Chapin, James Galloway, James Haggerty and Edwin Owen. Mr. Belote served as county coroner, Gabriel T. McIntyre as sheriff, in 1853, and Seldon Martin as commissioner in 1837.

EDEN TOWNSHIP

It is generally conceded that the Latta family was the first white family to settle in Eden township, although there always has been some dispute over the matter.

Robert Latta came to Eden township from Urbana, Ohio, in 1830, after having made the trip to Indiana for the purpose of taking medicines, etc., to his son, Johnson Latta, a physician in the Goshen neighborhood. Surveyors told the senior Mr. Latta about the excellent farm lands in Eden township, so on his way home to Urbana he visited it. Two years later Mr. Latta and his wife and daughter, Achsah, left their Ohio farm and came to the Haw Patch.

In the fall of 1832 William McConnell, also of Ohio, came and he and his wife and children, James, Alexander, Thomas C., William A. and Mary Ann, built their log house south of the Latta home.

The coming of these two families soon started a bit of public spirited rivalry, for Mr. Latta was a Whig and a Methodist, and Mr. McConnell was a Democrat and a Presbyterian.

In 1841 Dr. Johnston Latta, the physician in Goshen, came to the Haw Patch and lived on the old homestead farm until his death in 1873. Other early settlers were Laban Parks, Anthony Nelson, Kensell Kent, Reuben McKeever, Samuel Curl, John Curl, Obed Gaines, Mrs. Elizabeth Ramsby, John S. Ramsby, John Thompson, James Taylor, William Parks, William Collett, Robert McKibben, John and Andrew Funk, David Carr, Thomas Short, John Prough, William H. Poyser and John Poyser.

The township was organized in 1832. The first election was held in April of 1833 at the home of John Hostetler in Perry township near the county line. The township records of that date have been destroyed so it is not known who the first officers were. William McConnell claimed to have been the first justice of the peace, however. John Thompson was elected to this office a little later.

These pioneer farmers had a difficult time. The weeds were so thick that they choked out the crops, and the huge flocks of birds ate the grain before it could be harvested. It is said that horses and cattle often became lost in the weeds and starved to death. After a few years the hardy settlers conquered their enemies and soon were reaping profitable harvests from their lands.

In September, 1836, the county commissioners chose the home of Obed Gaines as a voting place and the first presidential election in Eden township was held in November of that year. Norman Sessions was the inspector.

Added to the difficulties of the settlers were several serious epidemics of fever, ague and erysipelas, and a gang of outlaws and horse thieves who made the territory an unpleasant and unsafe place to live. The horse stealing became so common that the settlers organized a protective society. One thief was caught and hanged. From then on the territory became a much more peaceful place and soon the outlaw gang disappeared.

The first church to be organized in Eden was the Methodist, and the meetings were held at the Robert Latta home. In 1842 the congregation built a small frame church on the Latta farm and called it Eden Chapel. A new frame chapel, costing $1,500 was built by James Tumbleson and dedicated in 1866.

The Presbyterian church was organized at the William McConnell home some time previous to 1835. A Baptist church was organized a little later, and a Methodist Episcopola society was organzied in 1842 or 1843. The first Amish Mennonite church did not come into existence until 1854.

There never have been many industries in Eden township other than farming and stock raising. Two sawmills and a grist mill were built around 1854 by Benedict Miller. William McConnell, the first postmaster in the settlement then called Slabtown, kept a small stock of general merchandise, and Timothy Hudson, Jr., opened a small store and ran an ashery. William and Timothy Hudson built a sawmill in 1856. In 1871 Jacob Crusen built a store in Slabtown but it was destroyed by fire two years later.

The Sycamore school district was organized in 1842, and the first schoolhouse was built in 1842.

CLEARSPRING TOWNSHIP

Prior to 1831 Clearspring and Eden tonwships, were united. Anthony Nelson came to Elkhart county from Ohio in 1829, and in 1831 he came to this territory, entering two 80-acre lots. David Rogers came from Wayne county, New York, in 1833 and entered 1,280 acres of land as a speculator. Erastus Nelson came soon afterward, and Norman Sessions settled here in 1834. On Feb. 3, 1835, Mr. Sessions was married to Minerva Gaines and their first-born is said to be the first white child born in the township and the first white person to die here.

The years 1834, 1835 and 1836 saw many white settlers come to this fertile territory: John Sprout, Anthony Nelson, Nathan Bishop (first preacher in the township), James Gordon, Amos Newhouse, John S. Gibson, Elijah Pixley, Charles Roy, Simeon Crosby, John Hubbard, Nicholas Lowe, and others. Then and the next two or three years dated the arrival of Ernestus Schermerhorn, Willard Hervey, William Dallas, James Haviland, Henderson Potts, N. P. Osborn and David Ray.

Mr. Dallas, upon his arrival, utilized the water power of the Elkhart river and built a primitive grist mill. Until then the settlers had taken their grain to Goshen, Ontario or VanBuren. A few years later he built a saw mill.

Immigrants came in large numbers and the price of land was increased from $1.25 per acre to eight and ten dollars. The government removed the Indians in 1840.

In March of 1837 Clearspring township was separated from Eden and the first election was held in April at the home of Elijah Pixley. The first trustees, so far as is known now, were Ernestus Schermerhorn, Willard Hervey, and Mr. Pixley. William F. Beavers and Norman Sessions were the first justices, N. P. Osborn was chosen clerk, with a salary of three dollars a year. Each of the trustees received $2.25.

Hawley Peck, in 1846, began growing mint and selling the oil. This grew to be a real industry in Clearspring. The oil was shipped to the eastern states and sold for as high as $5 a pound. Charles Roy and Ernestus Nelson also were among the early mint growers.

The first store in the township was opened by a Cummings family, south of Slabtown. Timothy Hudson, Jr., later had a store in connection with his sawmill and tannery. A brick yard was erected on the Harrison Smith land, and later two other yards were operated by B. F. Ditman and Henry J. Ulmer.

Roads were built in Clearspring as early as 1835. The first one ran east from Sycamore Corners, and formed a part of the Haw Patch, or Ligonier road.

In 1839 the township had its first school built, and the first religious group was the Methodist Episcopal organization, with Rev. James Latta as the promoter. When this church died out a Methodist Protestant church was started, with Rev. Beardsley in charge. The "Best Endeavor" church was organized some years later, and Rev. John Paul Jones was one of the preachers.

The church had an interesting origin. It was built on land deeded by John Greenawalt to the Evangelical Union Mennonites, to be used by them but to be free for other churches, and after their disuse of it it was to go to any other Christian organization, under the same conditions. A handsome brick church was built on the land, mostly by popular subscription, and was dedicated May 8, 1881. Rev. Jones conducted the services, with the assistance of Rev. D. Brenneman and Rev. Thomas H. Lowe. The church measured 32x54 feet and cost $3.00. The erection of the church came about largely through the efforts of Rev. Lowe, who was a former Mennonite minister. This society was organized in 1867 by Elder John Krupp. An Amish settlement started after the arrival of Jacob Hershberger, and now a large proportion of the township is Amish.

A portion of the town of Topeka is in Clearspring, and the other portion lies in Eden. Other than this, and the village of Emma, the township has no settlements.

Town of Topeka

Topeka and Eddy are the only two towns or settlements in Clearspring township.

Topeka is located where Slabtown or Haw Patch formerly stood. The Eden-Clearspring township line divides Topeka so a part of the town is in each township.

Topeka was platted originally by the Indiana Improvement Co. on June 14, 1893, the same year that the Wabash railroad was built. The Cummings family opened the first store, when the village was still called Slabtown, on the Eden line, and Timothy Hudson, Jr., opened his store in the Clearspring section. He operated the store in connection with his tannery and saw mill. The town grew rather well, and was incorporated Aug. 13, 1913. The first officers were: president, J. W. Priest, councilmen, Mr. Priest, James Gay, and Dr. W. O. Hildebrant, E.

P. Lombard was the treasurer, A. L. Gerber, the secretary, and E. P. Wemple the first marshal.

Two years after it was incorporated a modern system of waterworks was installed.

Topeka has an excellent public school, a thriving business section, churches, social organizations, its famous Sycamore Literary Hall, and a population of several hundreds.

The following article on the town of Topeka, written by Mrs. R. F. Miller, was read by her over station WRTC in Elkhart two or three years ago:

Greetings to an Unseen Audience:

Possibly some of our hearers do not know where Topeka is. It has been our experience to be so humiliated, by having people who live not more than a score of miles from us, say they did not know there was such a town in Indiana. Then, too, there may be those who confuse our home town with the much larger and much better known Capital of Kansas. This, too, has happened before, at the expense of mail, express and even freight deliveries. To all those who wish to add to their previous knowledge of Geography, let me say that Topeka is situated in the southwestern part of LaGrange county, Indiana.

We lay no claim to size, in fact the last census credited us with a population just under 500. As a town, we were not born yesterday. A village was started at this point, just about 100 years ago. While we will never be a city, we don't mind telling the world that we are now an incorporated town.

We will never rival the Capital of our State as a railroad center, but our town is served by the Wabash railroad and we are about equally distant from Chicago and Detroit. And we are entitled to have through trains stop and pick us up if we want to go to either of these two cities. We are also midway between National Road No. 20 and State Road No. 2, both of which are ours to use when we reach them.

We are surrounded by some of the best farm land to be found in the middle west. We are just on the boundary of the famous Haw Patch land, than which there is none better.

A careful survey of four square miles of territory, with Topeka in the exact center shows that 82 percent of the people living in the vicinity, live in their own homes. We feel that this is a record of which we may well be proud, and we also feel that it cannot be duplicated in many towns or cities in this part of the State. It proves that property in and around Topeka is considered a good investment, and that our people are home loving and thrifty.

Topeka is the home of the former Sycamore Literary Society, an organization that had its beginning about 75 years ago and flourished for nearly a half century. Like Rome which rose, flourished and decayed, it outlived its usefulness many years ago, but it served to develop the native ability of many young men and women who have since gone out to fill honorable positions in the world of business and literary enterprises. This society left as a heritage to the town of Topeka, an Opera House which would do credit to many a far larger town. The Sycamore Literary Society was once mentioned flatteringly in an issue of the Philistine, a publication of the late Elbert Hubbard of East Aurora, New York, who met his death with the ill-fated Lusitania during the World War.

Our town and the surrounding community supports four churches. Three of these churches unite for their Sunday evening services during July and August of each year. The school house lawn affords ample space, there are lights in abundance, comfortable chairs, competent ushers, congregational singing led and supplemented by a large union choir, and excellent pulpit talent. This open air church is self supporting and very popular, with an attendance varying from 300 to 500 each week. We believe that this method of solving the problem of Sunday evening church services during the hot weather is unique, and we feel that it is far better than the experience of the average church during the same period where an able minister delivers a well prepared sermon to a handful of people.

Should a blockade be declared tonight, on the before mentioned territory of four square miles, 2560 acres, such is the situation of the Topeka merchants and the farmers, that we could all survive for many months, possibly a year. Our physical, mental and moral well being could be sustained by that which is within our borders or could be evolved from that which is now within our borders.

We care for our own, be they sick or destitute, or simply in hard luck.

We enjoy mingling with the neighboring towns and communities because we believe that an interchange of ideas is conducive to greater happiness.

Billy Sunday used to say at the close of a sermon, "Speak to the fellow who sits next to you in the pew, you may like him." So I say to you, Visit our small town sometime, you will find us public spirited and hospitable and you may like us.

SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP

John B. Clark was the first white settler in Springfield township, having come in the fall of 1830. L. K. Brownell, another squatter, entered a claim at Mongoquinong soon afterward, and built a dam across Pigeon river. At the same time he began the construction of a two-storied grist mill and both were finished in the summer of 1831. French traders came from Fort Wayne and settled at Mongo in 1831, and much bartering was done between the whites and the Pottawatomies.

The territory looked promising with its grist mill, its large and abundant fish in the mill pond, the wild game, furs, and the fertile soil, and soon many settlers were living there. John O'Ferrell, a native Irishman, opened a store and was the first postmaster. Arthur Burrows opened a hotel in 1833, and a blacksmith made his appearance in Mongo. Truly the village was a thriving one.

Among the township's earliest settlers were Jesse Huntsman, William S. Prentiss, Benjamin Jones, Joseph Foos, Benjamin Foos, William Seaburn, Erastus Haskins, George Thompson, Elijah Fotherfill, Drusus Nichols, Otis Shepardson, George Ray (Peckham), William Bullmer, Samuel Bradford, Norman Dyer, Jacob and Isaac Gage, David Michael, Barnabas Thompson, and others. A few years later others came, among them being Leonard Appleman, Russell Brown, Almon Brine, Isaac Carpenter, Moses Chapin, Conrad Deal, W. B. Dunn, George Donaldson, Edwin Davis, Robert Dayton, William Eastlick, the Emersons, Rufus Freeman, Robert and G. W. Greenfield, Elias Gilbert, Job Gifford, Jacob Greene, J. T. Hobbbs, John and William Hall, Luke Hammond, Charles Hull, Sylvanus Hatch, Orsemus Jackway, Lehu Lackey, W. S. Newnam, D. I. and N. B. Newnam, Harvey and Elisha Olmstead, T. H. Nichols, Richard Rice, David Sockrider, Edward Smith, George Smith, Hiram Smith, E. G. Shepardson, James Shears, Elisha Talmage, B. B. Waterhouse, the Wades, Sheldon Williams, Job and James Wilcox, A. T. Wallace, Samuel H. Wright, Samuel Westcott, Ephriam Seeley, Jacob Vandeventer and others.

The years between 1836 and 1837 saw the great rush of settlers into Springfield. In 1838 many died of the epidemic of illness. 1838 was a very poor crop season, and a financial crash struck in 1837. Thieves, counterfeiters and outlaws terrorized the territory and brought despair to the hearts of the pioneers.

In 1832 George Bullmer built a sawmill on Pigeon river in the eastern part of the township, and a dam then was built across the river. Samuel Bradford, in 1833, built a sawmill on Turkey creek about a mile from its mouth. Another was built in 1838 by William S. Prentiss, on the same creek. In 1834 or 1835 Mr. Bradford built an addition to his mill and added machinery for carding wool. He sold both of his mills and the 80 acres of land on which they stood to Joshua T. Hobbs in 1836.

In 1836 the mill property at Mongoquinong was bought by Drusus Nichols, who also bought the O'Ferrell store and distillery by Mr. Nichols increased the stock of merchandise until it was worth around $6,000, and had a very large trade. Mr. Nichols died in 1848 and his property was bought by Robert Dykes.

Staley and Payne, early residents in the village, were coopers and manufactured whisky kegs and barrels. The distillery, owned by Mr. Nichols, was destroyed by fire in 1842. William Hall kept a hotel in the early pioneer days. Other taverns were kept by Albert Powell, Mr. Davis, John Brisco and the Sheldon brothers. The latter also were physicians. Erastus Haskins and John D. Filkins were early blacksmiths.

Early postmasters were Judge Seeley, Drusus Nichols and John O'Ferrell. Mason Brown, William Legg and Mr. Bourie were early mail carriers. During 1844-46 Mr. Nichols shipped over 1,000 barrels of flour to Fort Wayne, Adrian, Mich., and other trading points annually. This was considered a vast amount in those days, and Mr. Nichols' successors, Robert Dykes, also enjoyed a lucrative business.

Mr. Nichols employed a surveyor in 1839, and the following March had laid out about 180 lots. This was the first plat of Mongoquinong. The name later was shortened to Mongo.

The village of Springfield was laid out by Leonard Appleman in 1842, and 133 lots were offered for sale. Mr. Appleman built a storeroom and had several thousand dollars worth of merchandise. He also built a warehouse and bought a considerable quantity of grain and pork. After his death his son, John, took over the business. Zekiel Brown and David Paulus were business partners in the village, and George Porter and William Strayer were other early merchants.

The first church, the Methodist Episcopal society at Talmage Corners, was organized in 1838 and Rev. G. M. Boyd was the first minister. The society had 14 members. The Brushy M. E. society was organized in 1836 by Rev. T. B. Conley, with 11 members. The church building was erected in 1842. A United Brethren church was organized in Mongo in 1879 and Rev. T. A. Childs of Lima was the pastor. A larger and better building was erected in 1880 at a cost of $1,500.

A group of citizens met in June, 1858, and voted to build a "free" hall. The hall, called Union Hall, was built at a cost of $800.

LIMA TOWNSHIP AND TOWN OF HOWE

Every reader of LaGrange county history knows that Benjamin Blair, Nathan Fowler and Jason Thurston were the first white settlers in the township. They came in 1828. William Thrall and Jonathan Gardner came soon afterward and the five men and their families built up a settlement.

Before the coming of the white man the site of Lima, now Howe, was the home of part of the Pottawatomie Indian tribe. The land, called Mongoquinong Prairie by the Indians, was rich and fertile and had a number of beautiful lakes.

The township was organized May 14, 1832, and on Oct. 22, 1834, the village of Lima was laid out by Moses and Ica Rice. The Williams addition to the village was laid out in 1836, north of the original plat. The Indian population began to decrease and finally disappeared altogether, being removed by the government in 1839.

The entire county was divided into two townships in 1832, and the two organizations were called Lima and Greenfield townships.

John Kromer, surveyor, laid out the village of Mongoquinong in 1834. on land owned by Moses and Ica Rice. The Rice brothers donated 74 acres in consideration of the location of the county seat there. Two acres in the southeast corner of the village were laid out for a cemetery, now known as Riverside.

Nathan Jenks laid out the village of Ontario in 1837, and added an addition to it in 1844. The village was one of the most thriving in the early history of this section. A woolen mill, a flour mill, furniture factory, sash, door and blind factory, cider mill and a sorghum mill were established, and the rush of business was so great that the industries operated steadily.

Lima township boasts the first public school in the county. It was built in 1833 a half mile east of Mongoquinong. The name of this village was changed to Lima in 1834, and in 1909 was changed to Howe.

The population of the village increased during its first eight years from eight families to 350 residents. Nathan Merriman opened a tavern in 1835. D. F. F. Jewett used the old courthouse building for a tavern for several years. Henry W. Wood and Warren Lee kept the Lima House where the Kingsbury hotel now stands. In 1860 the business block on the east side was erected by Samuel Burnell, Samuel P. Williams, John B. Howe, and G. J. Spaulding at a cost of $18,000. David Pucket began manufacturing furniture in 1838, and in the same year Wright & Drake opened a wagon factory, Lyman Wilcox, a few years later, started a cabinet shop. Other pioneer manufacturers were Nathan and William Place, Theodore Moore, Richard and John Salmon, Samuel P. Williams, Taylor & Vance, Hill & Taylor, Mr. Keith, Hawks & Co., Woodruff & Morse, Gore & Hardesty, S. Flusher, Mr. Arnold, W. T. Miller, Albert Powell, John Taylor, Hiram Harding, H. W. Wood, Mr. Hort, William Marten, Robert Triplett, Samuel Ruick, J. H. Ladd, Follett & Johnson, Mr. Searing, Lewis P. Judson, William A. Mills, Palmer Grannis, Samuel Howard, John B. Howe, Alphonso Martin, S. M. Cowley, Alvaro Hunter and others.

Samuel P. Williams and John B. Howe founded the bank in Lima in 1854. In 1857 the bank became a branch of the State Bank of Indiana, with a capital stock of $150,000 and was owned by 12 men, among them being Mr. Williams, Mr. Howe, Samuel Burnell, Thomas J. Spaulding, S. Halsey and Philo Nichols. The institution became a national bank in 1862, and in 1880 became a private bank.

The village of Ontario in this township was the site of the famous old LaGrange County Collegiate Institute. Howe School, one of the finest military academies in the United States, has made Howe famous for many years. In the earlier days the young ladies' seminary, built by Samuel P. Williams in 1855, was one of the leading educational institutions of this section.

Rev. Leonard B. Gurley organized a Methodist church in Lima in 1831, and thus went down in the annals of history as the first preacher in the township of Lima. Rev. Christopher Cory organized a Presbyterian church in November, 1833. A Baptist church was organized in Lima Sept. 24, 1846 and Elder Fleming was its first preacher. Bishop Philander Chase was the first Protestant Episcopal minister to preach in Lima, having come in 1834. A Presbyterian church was organized in April, 1840, in Ontario.

The population of Howe today is approximately 700. It is one of the attractive villages of northern Indiana, and the beautiful Howe School campus attracts thousands of visitors annually. The village has a substantial bank, a public grade and high school, two churches, and numerous prosperous business houses.

Village of Ontario

The village of Ontario was laid out in March, 1837, by Nathan Jenks. The village comprised 23 blocks of ten lots each, two blocks of five lots each, two blocks of six lots each, and a public square. An addition was made to the village in June, 1844, by Mr. Jenks.

The first white settler of Ontario was George Latterar, who built a log cabin there in 1834. A short time later Henry Lake and the Gibson family located there, and soon were joined by J. C. Kinney and the Hubbard family.

NEWBURY TOWNSHIP AND TOWN OF SHIPSHEWANA

History says that the Woodbridge family came to this territory in 1831, and were the first white settlers. The land was not open to entry until later, and the first land certificate was issued by the government to Obadiah Lawrence July 17, 1835. Elijah West and a Mr. Andrews came to the territory in 1834, and in 1835 they built a dam and race and sawmill on Shipshewana creek. Mr. Andrews' death on Aug. 24, 1835, was the first among the early settlers.

The territory at that time was a part of Lima, and was not separated into its own organization until 1837. The settlers held their first meeting on April 3, 1837, at the home of Truman Wilkinson. Daniel H. Keasy and Elijah West acted as clerks, Amos Davis and James Cotton, judges, and Mr. Wilkinson, inspector. The following officers were elected: Amos Davis, justice; Willard Cotton, constable; Elijah West, overseer of the poor; Franklin Goodenough and George Hilt, road viewers.

Part of early Newbury township was marsh land and the rest of the land was covered by dense forests. Game was plentiful, as were honeybees, so the food problem was not difficult.

The first frame barn in the township was built by Franklin J. Goodenough. In February of 1837 George Lotterer took possession of land along Shipshewana lake, and laid out a village which he called Georgetown. The village never materialized beyond the plans which were drawn, and about eight years later Mr. Lotterer moved to Kansas.

Several religious groups opened meeting places, then, and now the township has several good churches. In 1844 the first settlement of the Amish people came to the township from Pennsylvania. They bought land and built their homes here. The land proved profitable to them, so they remained, and now, in 1936, a great percent of the population of Newbury is Amish.

A German Baptist, or Dunkard church was organized in 1854, and a Mennonite church also was formed in the early days. The postoffice at Pashan was opened in 1844.

White settlements were established at Pashan and Emma. The village of Shipshewana, now the largest town in the township, was platted originally in 1889 but was not incorporated as a town until April 16, 1916. The school building there was built in 1893. The town grew rapidly and numerous business places were opened. Now the town has a population of 261, with approximately 20 business places, one church, a splendid school which is being enlarged and improved this summer, and is only a short distance from popular Shipshewana lake. The town is connected with the transcontinental highway, US-20, by a wide concrete road.

The town of Shipshewana, in the western part of the county, was named for the famous Chief Shipshewana of the Pottawatomie Indian tribe. His band lived in the vicinity of Shipshewana lake. Chief Shipshewana died in 1841.

An imposing monument was erected in memory of Chief Shipshewana in 1931. Impressive ceremonies attended the unveiling, and thousands of people gathered to pay tribute to the great Indian chief for whom the town was named.

In December of 1888 Hezekiah Davis platted his large farm into lots and thus became the founder of the town of Shipshewana. In 1889 Abraham Summey, who owned the adjacent farm, platted his land as an addition to the town.

Jonathan J. Farver, owner of the Farver Lumber Co., was the first business man in the village. He started in the lumber business and today is one of the substantial lumbermen of Indiana. This was in January, 1889. Soon afterward Levi and John Miller, brothers, opened the first drygoods and grocery store. Warren Davis had the first hardware store and Fred Barrows the first hotel. The Sunthimer general store was among the first business places in Shipshewana.

About 15 years ago a disastrous fire destroyed much of the business section, but most of the buildings have been replaced.

The Shipshewana of today is a modern town of 261 population, has a grade and high school, a number of prosperous business houses, a church, a grain company, which also is the manufacturer of a well known brand of farm feeds, and a lumber yard.

Shipshewana lake, only a few miles from the town, draws many vacationers to its cool and shady banks, and the tabernacle on the shores of the lake is the scene of many large meetings.

Chief Shipshewana

When the first white settlers came to this territory Chief Shipshewana and his band of Pottawatomie Indians inhabited the land. The red men were amicable with the white men, hunted with them Game was plentiful and the white and traded wares and food with them. settlers had no trouble finding plenty of good food. They built their homes in the thickly wooded territory, cutting down trees for the logs, and the population began a steady increase.

In 1837 the government removed the Indians to a reservation in the western states. Chief Shipshewana was heart-broken because he had to leave his beloved homeland, and grieved so sorely that, a few years later, he and a few of his relatives were given permission to return. The old chief was happy again, but still missed his tribe. He died here in 1841, and, so the legend runs, was buried on the bank of Shipshewana lake. The exact location of his grave is not known.

One of the older residents of the community tells the following humorous anecdote of Chief Shipshewana:

Chief Shipshewana journeyed to Scott to visit the distillery and mill and talk with the miller. A jug of whisky, or "fire water," was setting on a nearby stump and the Indian chieftain discovered it soon after his arrival. The red man was overly fond of whisky and the chieftain was no exception. He kept his shrewd eyes riveted to the jug and the miller could not distract his attention. Finally, when the miller glanced away for a moment Chief Shipshewana snatched the jug of whisky up and started to run. The miller started after him, and around and around they went, the Indian managing to keep a good distance between himself and the milller.

Finally the miller overtook the chief and wrested the jug from him. Chagrined and disappointed Chief Shipshewana stalked back to his wigwam to nurse his insult.

The Pottawatomies were a friendly lot, but their fondness for drink made the white settlers ever on the alert to keep them from drinking too much, for an introxicated Indian was a dangerous person.

MILFORD TOWNSHIP

Milford township, at first a part of Greenfield, was organized Sept. 5, 1837, and Jacob Butts claimed to be the first white settler. He came in 1834. William Fitch and Richard Rice came a short time later, and between 1836 and 1838 the population of the territory grew rapidly. While the food problem was simplified by the abundance of wild game and the good farming lands, the settlers were harrassed by horse thieves and marauders.

Col. Cochran erected a sawmill in 1836, and the Bartlett brothers opened a tavern on the old plank road during the same year. Dr. John W. Dancer was the first physician. In 1838 the Methodist Episcopal society was organized at Mud Corners by Rev. Thomas Cawley. Brushy Chapel was built in 1857, and in 1864 Elder Martin organized a Church of God. The first school was built at Mud Corners in 1836.

Village of South Milford

The village of South Milford was platted in 1856 by Francis Henry and John A. Bartlett, who owned the land. Since it was in the south part of Milford township the two men named it South Milford.

Four years before this time Wildman & Taylor had opened a large general store, in partnership with Jonathan Law. Other early merchants were Hamlin Bros., Dr. Gower, Austin, Jenkins, W. W. Miller, Hamilton Trindle, and J. N. Strayer & Co. The original store building was owned by the Bartlett brothers, who also built the first hotel. Theodore Upson erected a wagon and carriage shop which thrived during its time. Orrin Fuller had a similar shop a few years later.

A year after the village was laid out Wildman & Taylor discontinued their store. Dr. Dancer came in 1855 and practiced for many years. Other South Milford doctors were Dr. White, Dr. Broughton, Dr. Robinson and Dr. W. A. Nusbaum.

South Milford's population today is close to 400, with a dozen or more business places, two churches and a public school.

A paved road, state road No. 3, connects the town with larger cities, and the Wabash railroad passes through the edge of the business section.

Stroh

The village of Stroh was platted by William Hayward Sept. 1, 1899. It was named Hayward, but in 1900 the name was changed to Stroh in honor of Emil Stroh, president of the Wabash Portland Cement Co. which has one of its largest plants in Stroh.

Mr. Stroh had bought a large acreage in the community in 1898 because of the marl deposits, and the following year he built the cement plant there. He had his land platted for the town in 1900.

Jacob Perkins owned the land adjacent to Stroh, so in 1900 he platted his land for the town of Elmira, expecting the Wabash railroad to run through his town. Because of the cement plant at Stroh the road was routed through that village, and Elmira now has only a store, hotel and one or two other business places.

Calvin Vanaucken platted the town of Stroh and engineered the building of the cement plant. Sylvester Francis and Isaac Wert built the first store, which was occupied by Mr. Case of Orland, who opened a general store in 1899. Dr. Bucher settled in Stroh that year as the first resident physician.

Roy Perkins, brother of Jada Perkins of the Farmers State Bank in LaGrange, was principal of the Stroh school when the first class was graduated.

The first church was the Christian church, built in 1901, and Rev. M. O. Johnson was the minister.

Mr. Hire built the elevator in 1900. The first bank was opened Nov. 7, 1915.

Today Stroh, a town of approximately 300 population, has a bank, the Wabash Portland Cement Co. plant, a postoffice, two garages, hardware, meat market, barber shop, two general stores, implement store, elevator, two churches, and a four-room school.

Among Stroh's first residents were Jacob Reed and family from South Milford, Mrs. Dora Clinesmith of Salem Center, the Perkins, Lower and Hire families, John Deal and others.

Among the early white settlers in Milford township were the Bartlett, Henry, Clark, Waterhouse, Whitford, Dancer, Calley, Hayward, Case, James, Carpenter, Cochran, Helmer, Shearman, Goodsell, Hatch, Dunn, Searls, Turner and Macy families.

GREENFIELD TOWNSHIP

LaGrange county, when it was organized in 1832, was divided into two townships, Lima and Greenfield. Later these two townships were subdivided, and now Greenfield township includes the land in the northeastern corner of the county.

William Miller was the first white settler, coming in 1829. Others followed him and the next two years saw the population increase rapidly. Samuel Burnside built the first sawmill in 1834. The mill now is known as Greenfield Mills and is owned by H. G. Rinkel.

The first village was platted in 1836 by John Kromer, surveyor, for Abraham K. Brower and Joseph Skerritt. The men named the village Lexington, but about 40 years later the name was changed to Brighton. Peter Beisel opened a store, the first in the village, and a short time later other stores were built by the Crandells and Longs.

Early Greenfield settlers included, in addition to those mentioned, the Agley, Bontrager, Fair, Fenzel, Kelly, Larimer, Nichols, Stroud, Stukey, Swihart, Woods, Bradford, Pollock, Scripture, Troyer, Wheeler, Brewster, Barrows, Taylor, Reed, Smith, Hern, Gilhams, Alspaugh, Anderson and Parham families.

The township has a number of churches and all of them have substantial patrons,

Brighton boasts a new and modern school and several business places.

Cedar and Wall lakes, two of the most popular fishing places and summer havens in Indiana, are located in Greenfield township.

CLAY TOWNSHIP

Clay township was organized on Sept. 4, 1838, but had been surveyed in 1829. Its first settlement was made in 1835-36 by John Ryason. Nathan Jenks obtained the first certificate for land on June 9, 1835. Another certificate was issued soon afterward to Daniel Webster, the great statesman, who later sold his land to Senator James R. Bayard. In 1839 Clay had 13 taxpayers, George Hood, Erastus Clark, Richard Clark, Reuben Hays, Levi Knott, Obadiah Lawrence, N. P. Osborn, Ernestus Schermerhorn, Elisha Thorp, William Thorp, Richard Thompson, John Woodward and David Woodward.

Other early comers were Eppah Robbins, Shedrick Carney, Samuel Carnahan, William Wigton, Samuel Beaty, Arad Lampman, Matthew Strickland, John Ryason, and others.

Eppah Robbins built the first blacksmith shop in 1836, and in 1837 George Wood erected a sawmill, later adding a grist mill. Robert Wigton built a sawmill in 1853.

Several churches were organized in the township during the pioneer days, and several of them are thriving today.

Some of the people who played important parts in the settlement and development of Clay township were Ernestus Schermerhorn, John H. Appleman, Byron Atwater, R. D. Babcock, Josiah T. Bowen, Hiram Carnahan, Emanuel Fleck, Seth Ford, Carey R. Frisbey, Christian Giggy, James Green, Samuel Olmstead, Daniel N. Stough, David Smith, John Roy, Elisha Taylor, Hezekiah Beebe, Leiflick Sanburn, Jacob Mosher, Caroline G. Bingham, Samuel Beaty, Arad Lampman, William S. Evans and his son, Thomas J., and Valentine Walter.

History of LaGrange County Schools

The First School in the County

The first public school in LaGrange county was built in 1833. It was a small log cabin located a quarter of a mile southeast of Lima. John B. Howe was the first teacher.

The school was a crude building. It had several small windows, a huge fireplace, and rough desks and benches for the students. The first enrollment was around 18 to 20, and Mr. Howe was paid the magnificent salary of $10 or $12 a month for his services. The second term of the school was taught by Frederick Hamilton, and after 1855 school was taught in private homes or vacant buildings, and the original building was unused.

In 1855 Samuel P. Williams, with assistance from the citizens, erected a frame schoolhouse at a cost of $2,500, and this was used for the well known seminary for young ladies.

The LaGrange Collegiate Institute was founded in 1836 or 1837, by Nathan Jenks. The plan was to pattern the institute after the Oberlin Institute of Ohio, and to offer a full theological course, a preparatory or academic course, a collegiate course, an irregular or shorter course, and a thorough course of higher education for ladies.

LaGrange Collegiate Institute

By far the most important educational institution in this part of the country, at that time, was the LaGrange Collegiate Institute.

The idea of establishing such an institution in the "West" originated in 1835 in Victor, N. Y., when a number of prominent men decided to found the school in LaGrange county.

A group of these men came to the vicinity of Ontario during 1836, where they purchased land and settled. The plan was perfected and the men proceeded to pattern the institute after the Oberlin Institute of Ohio. The first public meeting was held at the home of Lewis Vance at Lima on Feb. 6, 1837. The following resolution was made at the meeting: "That, in view of the prospects before us, we are warranted in undertaking to establish a literary institution to be located in this neighborhood, to be denominated the LaGrange Collegiate Institute."

Joshua T. Hobbs, Mills Averill, Nathan Jenks, Elisha Dickinson, Ansel Dickinson, Rev. John J. Shipherd and Thayer H. Codding were selected as a board of trustees. Many offers of land, money and labor were given at the meeting and everything looked promising for the institute.

It was decided that the academic instruction should include five departments: a preparatory school; a collegiate course; a full theological course; a shorter course for those advanced in years or "in peculiar circumstance"; and a thorough course of female education.

Two days after the public meeting the trustees selected Ontario for the location of the institute, and a building was erected just over the line in Bloomfield township. Nathan Jenks offered $5,000 to the fund if an additional $10,000 could be raised by the citizens. In May, 1837, the trustees ordered that a frame building, 18 by 26 feet, be erected for a workshop for the carpenters and other laborers, and later to be used as a preparatory school room and dormitory.

Mr. and Mrs. C. W. Wilson taught in this building during the winter of 1837-38. An epidemic struck the community during the summer of 1838, and only one person, a Mr. Salmon, was able to be up to help care for the stricken families. Mr. and Mrs. Wilson taught the following winter in the same building.

In 1837 sufficient funds were raised and in June plans were made for the building of the institute. The frame was erected in August, and the building was completed in 1840. It was 50x60 feet in size and three stories in height. Classes were opened Oct. 21, 1839, with W. J. Baxter as principal.

The building, when completed, cost about $4,000. The $10,000, only partly paid, raised by subscription in 1866-67, was used as an endowment fund, drawing interest, and as quickly as the notes were redeemed the money was lent again. It was in this way, along with the tuition of the scholars and the land rentals, that the expenses of the school were met.

The annual enrollment of the institute often reached 125, and during the life of the institute more than 2,000 names were on the roll.

The principals were: Cyrill W. Wilson 1838-39; Witter J. Baxter 1839-40; Rev. John D. Skelly 1840-41; Rev. Julius Steele 1841-42; Henry Steele 1842 (one term); Rev. William Jones 1842-44; Edward Brown 1843 (one term); Rufus Patch 1844-49; Rev. A. H. Kerr 1849-50; Rufus Patch 1850-56; Rev. Henry C. Morse 1856-57; A. G. VanEtten 1858 (one term); Frank Cotton 1859-60; and Rufus Patch 1862-79.

Competition, in the form of village high schools, was too great for the famous old LaGrange Collegiate Institute, and in 1881 it fell into the hands of a receiver.

Young Ladies' Seminary

Another important step in the education of LaGrange county's young people was the young ladies' seminary at Lima. The founding of the school is accerdited to Samuel P. Williams, who, with the assistance of other citizens of the community, erected the seminary building at a cost of $2,500.

Eliza Dimond, a graduate of Mount Holyoke Seminary, was employed to be in charge of the seminary. She was assisted by Julietta L. Oaks and Mary A. Sherring. The tuition was collected by Mr. Williams, and Miss Dimond received a salary of $300 a year. The tuition charges, as fixed by Miss Dimond were as follows: common English branches, $3; higher English branches, $4; Latin, $2; French, $2; penciling, $2; monochromatic, $5; crayolithic, $7; pastel, $7; piano lessons and use of instrument, $10; melodeon lessons and use of instrument, $10.

Gov. Slade, president of the national board of education, sent Miss Dimond to Lima, and when the seminary first opened 25 young ladies were enrolled. The enrollment finally reached 60.

The land where the building stood was donated by Mr. Williams. In 1862 the seminary building was sold to the village and was used as a public school for many years.

LaGrange's First School

The first school in LaGrange was opened in 1850, and J. C. McIntosh of Connersville was the first teacher.

In a copy of the LaGrange Standard, dated Feb. 24, 1876, is found the following information concerning this school, written by A. D. Mohler, A. M.:

"Mr. McIntosh's services extended through one year, when he returned to Connersville where he has since resided. He was succeeded in 1851 by Robert Parrett, who taught one year, and then entered the ranks of the legal fraternity. He continued in his calling until the breaking out of the rebellion, when he entered the Union army and was killed by the falling of a tree near Vicksburg, Miss. Mr. Parrett also served one term in the state assembly as a member of the house of representatives.

"Isaac Mahuran was the next teacher. After teaching for a few months he received an appointment to a position in the schools of Fort Wayne, and tendered his resignation, which was accepted, and John Paul Jones, present county recorder, was appointed to fill the vacancy. Mr. Jones taught the remainder of the year.

"In 1854 J. B. Clark took charge of the school and held it for several years. He was succeeded in turn by Thomas L. Hulbert, George Hall and Mr. Pierce. With the close of Mr. Pierce's administration as a teacher the history of the LaGrange seminary closes.

"At times during the history of the school its reputation was widespread, and even within the last few months the superintendent of the LaGrange graded schools has received letters from teachers from a distance asking for positions in the LaGrange seminary.

"The history of the building during these years presents some things worthy of note. After being in possession of the M. E. church for some years, it was sold, through some cause of financial embarrassment, to Samuel Thurber. He conveyed it to the G. R. & I. R. R. Co. Afterward the railroad company, through Mr. Reed, a banker of Sturgis, sold the building to parties in the East. In 1866 the Moon Bros. bought the building, and moving it on their grounds east of the Haw Patch road, have occupied it ever since as their shop for carriage and wagon painting and trimming.

"The public schools of LaGrange were but district schools until 1866, when the two-story frame building now in use was erected.

"Among the teachers in the district schools, however, may be mentioned Samuel P. Bradford of Lima, now an attorney of this county, and Rev. J. W. Welch, now pastor of the M. E. church in Auburn, DeKalb county.

"When the building was ready for occupancy, a course of instruction embracing higher branches than those taught in the district, was adopted, which continued with some few changes, until the opening of the schools in 1874, when a complete graded course was adopted and the schools brought more nearly to the requirements of the age.

"The principals since 1866, with their time of service, are as follows: A. W. Durley, one year; J. H. Graham, two years; C. Hewitt, one year; Alfred Bayliss, now of Sterling, Ill., two years; Samuel Lilly, one year; O. A. Reubelt, one year, and A. D. Mohler, now in his second year.

"In 1875 the frame building was decided to be too small for the accommodation of the pupils of the town. The old building was moved back and a new brick one was begun on the site of the old one. The general design is of the modern style of architecture. It embraces a main building three stories in height above the basement and a wing two stories in height. The size of the main building on the ground plan is 60 by 70 feet, and that of the wing, 31 by 64 feet. The basement is to be used for furnace rooms, storing away wood, and rooms for exercise in stormy and inclement weather.

"On the first floor there will be six rooms, two in the wing and the others in the main building. There are also two halls in which are placed the stairways, wardrobes, etc., one of the halls being in the main building, the other in the wing. The size of the halls are 21 by 60 feet, and 16 by 31 feet.

"The plan for the second floor is the same, with the addition of a superintendent's office in the tower directly over the main entrance. The hall on the second floor will be a fine place for a public library, and should be used for that purpose. On the third floor is the lecture room, an excellent place for exhibitions, concerts and the like. The size of this room is 43 by 60 feet. This is approached by two stairways giving ample means of ingress and egress. On this floor, also, a large tank is to be placed in a room set apart for the purpose, thus giving the means of controlling in its incipiency any fire which might break out in the building.

"Each part of the structure has its own entrance. The lighting of the rooms is by six windows to each room placed in groups. There are three windows in each group, thus giving as much continuous surface as possible for blackboards. Each room is to have its own wardrobe and place for putting away apparatus. These are placed in the halls at the sides of the stairways.

"The seating capacity of each room is estimated at 40 pupils, thus giving accommodations for 480 pupils. The building is to be covered with a Mansard roof. The heating and ventilating of the building is to be done by means of three furnaces with their equipments. The apparatus for this purpose has been procured of the Ruttan Heating and Ventilating Co. of Bloomington, Ill.

"When completed, it will compare favorably with any building of its kind in northern Indiana.

"There are enrolled in the schools at present 330 pupils, with an average attendance of 275. The schools are divided into three departments, high school, grammar, and primary, —12 grades.

"The teachers now at work are A. D. Mohler, superintendent; Eliza Drake, teacher in high school; George Machan and Sarah Moore, teachers in grammar department, and Hattie Carter and Mattie Parry in the primary department.

"The schools are in successful operation, although crowded, and, taken altogether, the educational outlook for LaGrange presents a promising state of affairs."

OTHER EARLY SCHOOLS

Johnson Township

Johnson township's first public school was taught at Wright's Corners, it is thought, in a log building erected in 1836 for this purpose. In 1838 a Mr. Barns, who lived a short distance north of Wolcottville, built a log barn and his daughter taught during that year. In 1839 a log schoolhouse was built a half mile north of Wolcottville, and Ozias Wright was the first teacher. The building was destroyed by fire a few years later, and another was built in its place. Several terms of school were taught in the house owned by Mr. Wolcott.

In 1838 a log schoolhouse was built a half mile south of Wolcottville, and Levi L. Wildman was the first teacher. He was boarded in the homes of his pupils, and was paid ten dollars a month for his services.

Wolcottville Seminary

One of the most important schools in LaGrange county at that time was the Wolcottville Seminary. Dissention between the Protestants and Catholics was instrumental in the founding of this institution, and in 1851 Mr. Wolcott asked Ex-Gov. Slade of Vermont, president of the national board of education, to send a competent Christian teacher to Wolcottville, to act as governess in his own family until arrangements could be made for a public school.

Ex-Gov. Slade immediately sent Miss Susan Griggs, who commenced her educational work with only one scholar. The enrollment increased to 12 pupils, and the following summer she had 30 pupils.

In 1852 Mr. Wolcott, at an expense of more than $3,000, erected the seminary, and in November of the same year school was begun in the new building, with Miss Griggs in charge. Miss Eliza Dudley of York state was employed to assist her.

Miss Griggs worked diligently and tirelessly until 1869, when her health became poor and she was compelled to retire. A Sunday school was organzed in the seminary in 1852, with Miss Griggs in charge, and continued until the school there ended.

VanBuren's First School

Clarissa Munger was the first "school ma'am" in VanBuren township, and she taught her pupils in a log schoolhouse on the land of Nathaniel Callahan. In 1835 a school was started at the village of Marion, and a year or two later another was built south of the river at the Nicholas Sidener home. Schools also were maintained at Marshall, Bethel and Stone lake.

Eden's First School

The first school taught in Eden township was in the winter of 1834, when Kensell Kent organized a school in a log cabin a half mile west of Denny's Corners. In 1836 a log building was erected and Robinson Ramsby was the first teacher. Old Mr. Lucky taught in 1837. Another of the early teachers was Achsah Kent, who later married Nathan Frink.

A frame building later took the place of the crude log cabin school. Another was built and classes were held for 15 years. The site then was changed, and a brick building was erected in 1877, and was known as the Haw Patch school. The Horner school was built several years later.

"THE LITTLE RED SCHOOL"

The above represents an early type of school in LaGrange county, though no doubt preceded by some log schools in the earliest period. This was a Springfield township school built in 1849 and is still standing on a farm where it was moved.

First School in Springfield

Otis Shepardson, Jr., was the first school teacher in Springfield township, and the first schoolhouse was built in 1835. After a few years another school was built at Thompson's Corners. This was a frame structure and was used for many years.

In 1840 a log cabin that had been built for a dwelling was converted into a school. This was located a short distance north of Applemanburg. Harriet Twitchell of near Orland was hired to teach, and her salary was $1.50 per week. About ten years later a frame school was built near the same spot, and Russell Brown was the first teacher. This school was used for many years.

At a very early date a log school was used at Talmage Corners, but little is known of this, and the name of the first teacher is unknown.

Several other schools were taught in the township, among them being the one in the Sanderson neighborhood and the one near the William Dunbar farm.

Clearspring

The first school in this township was opened in the fall of 1839 in a small log cabin on the Charles Roy land. Anna Maria Crosby, who married Samuel Dallas in 1841, was the first teacher, and she received $1.25 a week for her work in the building which was only twelve feet square.

In 1840 two other log schools were built, one at Hervey's Corners and the other at the Hiram Taylor farm. Other schools followed,—one at Pixley's in 1850, Sycamore school in 1849, and finally, in 1870, a larger one was built to accommodate the increasing enrollment.

Other early schools were the Walnut, the Jordan, the Wertinger, the one on Nathan Bishop's land, the Sloan, Hackenburg or the Red, the Harris, Chandler, Streeter's, and the old Curl School.

Greenfield Township Schools

One of the earliest schools in the county was opened in Greenfield township in 1830, with Jane M. Clark Prentiss as the first teacher. The school was located in a log cabin near Lexington, and had about 60 scholars. The cabin was used until 1836, when a large frame building was erected in the village. The school had two large rooms, and, with the exception of the one in Ontario, was the best in the county. The enrollment was over 100, and the pupils were divided into grades. Daniel Graham, afterward the president of Hillsdale college, was one of the teachers. In 1854 the building was displaced by another one, and later a brick school was built.

Among the early teachers here were George Green, William Hopkins, Mrs. Catharine McKinney, John Wylie, Hiram Smith, and a Rev. Merrell.

Some authorities say that the first real school in the township was the one at Gale's Corners, built in 1836. The log cabin was erected solely for a school.

Newbury

A cabin of unsquared logs, on the Joseph Keasy farm in Newbury township, served as the first school, and Mary Pomeroy was the first teacher. The second school in this township was built in 1840, and the third one in 1842. The teachers were paid from $1.25 to $2.00 a week, and classes were held nine hours a day, six days of the week.

Milford

The year 1836 saw the first school in Milford township, and, with Orris Danks as the first teacher, about a dozen children were given the advantages of education. The school was located at "Mud Corners," and was used until 1854, when Capt. Barry and Judge Seeley erected another one, using cobble stones and mortar for the walls. The scholars, however, amused themselves by cutting the walls with their jackknives, so it was necessary to build another school, as the first one became unsafe with its mutilated walls.

The second school in Milford township was built in 1838, of logs, a half mile north of South Milford. Other early schools in this township were the one in the Perkins neighborhood, the Cochran school, the one near the Kinsman sawmill, and finally in 1854, a frame building was erected in the town of South Milford. This later was displaced by a brick school.

Clay

Clay township was divided into school districts in 1844, but the first school in the township was built in 1837. It was only 18 feet square, but served not only as a school but also as a place for social gatherings. A little later another school was built on the Henry Wallace land.

Eventually other schools sprang into existence and then passed into oblivion. Some of the early ones were Shirley's, Saylor, Ford, Beatty, Green, Rowan, Robbins, Miller, Walter, Everett, Roy and Poynter.

Bloomfield

Almira Crandall, who later became the wife of Ebenezer Hill, was the first school teacher in Bloomfield township. The first schoolhouse was built of logs, in the spring of 1838. Malcolm Burnett taught the school the following year, and later teachers were Rev. T. B. Connelly, John Rhodes, R. C. Blackman, Miss Griffith and Miss Weir.

LaGrange County Institutions

County Court Houses

Lima was the first county seat, and in 1833 the first courthouse, a small frame building, was erected there. Later, when it was decided that LaGrange would be the better location for the county seat, as it was in the center of the county, the second courthouse was built in LaGrange in 1843. Neither had vaults of any kind in which to safeguard the valuable documents.

In 1877 the county commissioners, at their September meeting, determined to erect a permanent courthouse, modern in every detail, and the work was begun in 1878.

T. J. Tolan & Son of Fort Wayne were engaged as the architects, and the general outline for the plans of the building were drawn by the county auditor, Samuel Shepardson, and the county clerk, Samuel P. Bradford, and were adopted by the commissioners. The contract was awarded to Bosseker & Begue of Fort Wayne, who bid $46,700. The corner stone was laid on Aug. 15, 1878. The building was completed Nov. 13, 1879.

The courthouse, of red brick, is 64 feet eight inches by 100 feet eight inches, with two stories above the basement, and a tower built up 125 feet.

On the first floor are the offices of the county clerk, county recorder, county surveyor, sheriff, county treasurer and county auditor. On the second floor the large courtroom occupies the east end of the building. The county superintendent's office and the two jury rooms are on the north side of the corridor, and the county nurse's office, the judge's office and welfare office are on the south side.

The dome has three floors, first, the clock room, second, the bell room, and third, the dial room.

The basement has four vaults.

The total cost of the building, according to the county auditor's statement in 1880, was $61,498.66. The work on the building was interrupted in March, 1879, when the contractors complained that they were losing money. Andrew Ellison was appointed on the part of the contractors as their agent, to receive and pay out the money on the contract in their behalf, and the commissioners were given the right to control the employment of labor and the purchase of all materials required to complete the building, with the county paying for all materials and labor in excess of the contract price.

The rooms first were heated with stoves. Later a hot water heating system and modern plumbing were installed throughout.

The public square was inclosed with an iron fence at a cost of $2,500. The fence was taken down a number of years ago, and the courtyard now is one of the beauty spots of the town, with its trees, shrubbery, flowers, fish pool and benches.

Rogers Orphans' Home

The Rogers orphans' home is located in Clearspring township northeast of Topeka. It is recognized as one of the best conducted in the state.

The orphanage was built through the efforts of Dr. David Rogers. Dr. Rogers was born June 2, 1786, and died Feb. 24, 1871. As he had always been greatly interested in the invalid and the cripple, he gave his services often times without charge. When his will was executed in 1868 he instructed that 80 acres of his land in Clearspring and 160 acres in Eden to be turned over to the commissioners of LaGrange county, and their successors, in trust forever, for the use and benefit of the orphans and all other destitute people of the county.

The large home was built on the 80-acre tract, and was remodeled in 1892. In 1922 it was remodeled again and a large brick addition was built. In recent years donations to the home have been made by Jacob Byler, Zopher E. Royer, Rudolph Clouser, D. D. Church and others. The building is modern in every respect, having steam heat, hot and cold water, electricity and many other conveniences. The children are enrolled in public school as well as Sunday school. Allen Hart was the first child to enter the home, April 8, 1886. Now between 25 and 30 children are cared for there. Their health and welfare is guarded constantly by Mr. and Mrs. Minich, and each child has his or her own place in their affections.

LaGrange County Infirmary

The first paupers' farm was purchased north of LaGrange, but later was sold and 160 acres three miles south of town were purchased, and a building was erected for the occupancy of those dependent upon the county for support. In February, 1871, Dr. David Rogers died, leaving all of his real estate in LaGrange county to the commissioners and their successors, to be used for the benefit of orphans and the county's dependents. The Rogers orphanage now stands on one of his farms, in Clearspring township, and scores of homeless children have been cared for there.

The present LaGrange County Infirmary found its origin in 1882. On June 5 of that year County Commissioners Elias Wight, G. W. Edgecomb and A. Blackman purchased 150 acres of land in section 24, Clay township, from William S. Boyd, less than a mile from the corporation limits of LaGrange, for an adequate infirmary. The purchase price was $7,500. The contract for a new infirmary was let August 25, 1882, to P. N. Stroup & Co. for $8,768.19, the building to be completed before March 1, 1883. The barn at the infirmary was built in 1883. The buildings have proved quite adequate for infirmary purposes since that time, though there is a demand for a reconstructed or new building for men. Of recent years the institution has been thoroughly modernized. A new steam heating plant was installed in 1933. In 1936 modernized water and sanitary systems were installed. The institution has a good rating with the state authorities. It is inspected monthly by the county nurse and a report made to the county commissioners. The second floor of the women's building was arranged as a county hospital in 1924. An operating room and rooms for patients were equipped with the thought that the hospital would be of general use for the people of the county. It was used by quite a number during its first years but later it was little used as a hospital.

LaGrange Carnegie Library

The beautiful public library building in LaGrange is the only Carnegie library in the county.

The first public library here was established in 1912, through the efforts of the Women's Club League, and Florence Herbert (now Mrs. Don C. Heffley of Fort Wayne) was appointed the librarian. Her mother, Mrs. H. M. Herbert, assisted her and after her marriage acted as librarian. Frank J. Smith, Mrs. R. L. Porterfield, Leon Rose, Mrs. Lillian M. Ganiard and Mrs. R. H.

Rerick composed the first library board.

The rapid increase of books and borrowers compelled the library to be moved into larger quarters a few years later. The second location was soon found to be inadequate so Leon Rose, with the assistance of John W. Hanan, wrote to the Carnegie foundation fund and asked for the money with which to build a library. They secured a donation of $12,500 and the Rose heirs, through Leon Rose, purchased the corner lots at South High and West Spring streets of the Samuel Galloway heirs. Here a library and city hall were built.

In 1917 the two buildings were constructed. The contractor who was building the National bank building was engaged for these two buildings, and thus the construction cost considerably less than it would have otherwise. Mrs. Arthur F. Krueger succeeded Mrs. Herbert as librarian a few years ago, and she was succeeded by Kathryn Smith, who serves in that capacity now.

The library has two large, well lighted reading rooms, one for adults and one for juveniles. New books and magazines are added every week and the institution has a very large circulation. Miss Smith's assistant is Gladys Morrison.

School students are permitted to help Misses Smith and Morrison in order to acquaint themselves with the work as well as with good literature, and their services are recognized on their scholastic reports.

Howe School

Howe School, an endowed, military, boarding school for boys, located in Howe, is one of the outstanding military academies in the United States.

The school was founded in 1884. It owes its inception to John Badlam Howe whose liberal bequest to the Episcopal church of the purpose of Christian education was utilized by Bishop David Buel Knickerbacker in the establishment of this school.

Frances Marie Glidden Howe, wife of the founder, and his brother, James Blake Howe, were liberal backers of the school in its earlier years. In later years Dr. Clarence John Blake, Samuel P. Williams, Charles F. Gunther, Percy D. Dwight and others were backers of the school.

The founder, John Badlam Howe, was born March 3, 1813. He was graduated from Trinity college in Hartford, Conn., and came to Lima in 1833. He taught school in Lima that year, and in 1834 became a member of the bar. He was the first resident lawyer of LaGrange county. Mr. Howe served as a member of the state legislature from 1840 to 1841, and was a member of the constitutional convention in 1850.

Because of his intense interest in education, Mr. Howe left his bequest of several thousand dollars, with which Howe School was founded. He died Jan. 22, 1883.

The following year Bishop Knickerbacker, Mrs. John B. Howe, and Rev. Dr. Charles N. Spaulding established the Howe Grammar School, and Dr. Spaulding was the first rector. Mrs. Howe generously gave the old Howe homestead for the school. The house stands on the east corner of the campus, and is occupied by the headmaster.

When the school opened only four boys were enrolled. As the enrollment increased each year, new buildings and facilities were added.

Dr. Spaulding resigned as rector in 1895 and Rev. John Heyward McKenzie leased the school. James B. Howe, Mrs. John B. Howe, Dr. Blake, Charles F. Gunther and others who were interested made substantial and frequent donations. Mr. Williams gave a tract of land, now know as Williams field, which brought the total number of acres of the campus to more than 40.

Dr. McKenzie died 25 years later, and on Nov. 1, 1920, Rev. Charles Herbert Young of Chicago became the school's third rector. He served faithfully in his office until a few years ago. His son-in-law, B. B. Bouton, now serves as head of the school.

The average enrollment of cadets is around 160, and the school has three separate divisions, the Lower, Middle and Upper. Modern dormitories, or halls, house the boys. The beautiful St. James chapel testifies to the importance of religion as the foundation of true education. The rectory, a large and imposing mansion, stands in the center of the campus, and is the scene of many social affairs that aid in promoting the home-like atmosphere for the young boys.

Howe School's campus lies on the east side of State Road 9, and the dress parades on Sunday afternoons draw hundreds of spectators.

A golf course, baseball field, football field, a completely equipped gymnasium, an infirmary, library, academic building, administration building, mess hall, White Hall, Gray Hall, Blake Hall, tennis courts, conservatory, parade grounds, servants' quarters, the chapel, all can be seen from the highway.

The chapel itself is a thing of beauty. It is built in the early English style of architecture. At the southwest corner stands a square tower in which hangs a bell, the gift of James B. Howe, the electric clock with Westminster chimes, donated by Percy D. Dwight, and the tubular bells, the gift of Dr. John H. McKenzie in memory of Clara Bauer and Alice Poage.

The interior of the chapel is in the style of the famous chapels at Oxford, such as Magdalen and All Souls. The canopied stalls, panels, lecturns and fald stools are of quartered oak and are handsomely carved by hand. The memorial altar is of white marble. A beautiful triptych, including Sig. Ducci's copy of "The Ascension" and rare copies of Fra Angelico's Angels, hang above it. The large organ is in the choir loft.

The Mother's Chapel, in the south transept, is dedicated to the Mother of Jesus in memory of mothers of the Howe School cadets. Bronze tablets on the walls contain the names of several hundred mothers who are dead. Under the sanctuary is a crypt chapel in which repose the bodies of the Howe and Blake families and of Rev. Dr. McKenzie. The beautiful white marble altar in this crypt, in memory of Bishop Knickerbacker, was presented by F. J. Lantz of Montreal. The groined arches of the crypt are beautiful architectural features found in few buildings in the mid-west. The chapel is one of the most imposing in America.

The motto of Howe School is "A Clean Mind in a Sound Body," and everything possible is done by the faculty and all others connected with the academy to uphold the motto.

The Limberlost Music Camps

The Limberlost summer music camps, formerly the Wainwright Camps, have made LaGrange famous the nation over. The idea for the camps was conceived by J. W. Wainwright in 1926. Mr. Wainwright then lived in Fostoria, Ohio, and had married a former LaGrange girl, Jeanette Streeter.

Mr. Wainwright had achieved wide fame by piloting several bands to or near the national championship and taking a leading place in Ohio in the field of musical developments in the public schools.

The dormitories, mess hall, practice cottages and other buildings were erected on the shores of beautiful Oliver lake, and the first season that the camps were opened 62 pupils were enrolled. The enrollment the second year increased to 298 students, and each year not only the enrollment grows, but new facilities are added, new courses are offered, and new improvements are made to attract the young musician. Public concerts, recitals, programs and other entertainments are given throughout the camp season at the novel outdoor amphitheatre.

In 1935 the accommodations for girls were expanded by the erection of seven attractive dormitory cabins.

The organization was incorporated this year (1936) under the name "The Limberlost Camps, Inc." J. W. Wainwright is president, A. J. Stephens vice-president, J. S. Wainwright secretary-treasurer. A. K. Germanson and Kenneth Peterman, with the above three officers, are directors. Plans are made to erect a large dining hall, seven more cabins for the use of girl students and a number of cottages for instructors and practice buildings for students, making it possible to expand the attendance. Besides instruction in band, orchestra, piano and vocal music, the institution gives instruction in scholastic subjects, dancing, dramatics.

Sycamore Hall

The following article was published in the LaGrange newspapers in June, 1935, and was written by Mrs. R. F. Miller of Topeka. At the time the article was published the people of Topeka were giving a series of public programs to raise funds for the repair of the famous hall.

Following the Civil War Jaynes Norman Babcock came from Ohio to teach the Gerber school, a mile west of Hawpatch. He found an active literary society holding meetings on Friday evenings at the Sycamore school a mile north, called the Star Literary society.

About 1879 the county superintendent of schools, S. D. Crane, forbade the use of the school building for literary purposes, claiming that it was destructive to school property. Many members who realized that they were getting benefits were incensed at the sweeping command

and decided to provide a home for their society. The Mennonite congregation at Maple Grove were considering abandonment of their frame church and the building of their modern brick church. So the Sycamore Literary society purchased the old church and moved it to Sycamore Corners a mile north of Topeka and rebuilt it for a hall. Mr. Babcock and Ira Ford gave their note for $500 to the Straus bank of Ligonier for this purpose.

In addition to the regular meetings, which were held during the winter months, ice cream festivals, lectures and concerts were held in the building and at least one home talent play was given each winter. Once the play had to be given three nights. The note was paid at the bank very soon after the building was completed. Much of the rebuilding was done by members, which added to its value in their estimation.

After the Wabash railroad had been built, a postoffice located, more stores opened, more people were living in the town and the name was changed from Hawpatch to Topeka, it seemed a bit of a hardship to go a mile from town to attend the meetings of the literary society, so it was deemed best to move the hall to town. In 1895 this was done, and it was placed where it still stands, as a part of the former Kemp garage, just west of Main street.

After 10 years of usefulness on this site it was thought to be not quite good enough. Money was needed for repairs and would it not be best to use that money and more with it and build a new building, something with dignity befitting an organization which had functioned for 40 years and contributed to the intelligence and integrity of the community?

Father spent much time, many sleepless nights meditating on the question. He finally evolved a plan—to approach Andrew Carnegie on the subject. It so happened that at that time the wily Scot was having a legal bout in Cleveland and father had a brother who was a judge in that city. Father went to Cleveland and interviewed his brother as to the best way to get an audience with Carnegie. He was told there was no chance at all. Carnegie, to get away from the public gaze, was staying with a friend rather than at a hotel. Upon father's insistence, my uncle remembered that Carnegie's host had promised to repay a favor. This led to an interview. Carnegie, his vexation very much in evidence, said, "If you want a library, write to my secretary in New York." Father replied, "But I do not want a library." The renowned giver of libraries was surprised and asked what was wanted. Father asked for a few minutes and unfolded the project that was so dear to him. Carnegie forgot his displeasure and asked numerous questions and finally dismissed the matter by suggesting, instead of the $8,000 proposed, $10,000 would be better and promised to give the last half of that amount.

Father came home and spent more sleepless nights. He decided to ask Jacob Straus of Ligonier to provide the first half of the $10,000. Mr. Straus and his two sons agreed that it would be creditable for the Straus name to be associated with that of Carnegie in such an undertaking. The money was deposited and the work began. On November 24, 1905, the new hall was dedicated with appropriate ceremonies.

The piano was given by a Chicago company after father persuaded them it would be a good advertisement.

Feeling that nothing but the best would be good enough for the occasion, Governor J. Frank Hanly and James Whitcomb Riley were invited to assist in the dedication. The governor said it would be absolutely impossible for him to leave his office and the "Hoosier Poet" said he had long ago begun turning down such invitations. Nevertheless they both came. It is said a train had to be chartered from New Paris to accomplish it. The pupils of the school acted as an escort for the distinguished guests. All the women in the community were drafted to help put on the banquet.

Seats were sold and reserved a week in advance. My sister and I had charge of the sales; prices ranged from three to five dollars. We did not expect many to come in to buy tickets but we were happily disappointed and at times people actually stood in line for a chance to invest.

After nearly 10 years with regular Friday night meetings of the Sycamore Literary society, a fire occurred that greatly damaged the building. This was April 16, 1915. The insurance, together with contributions from the community rebuilt the building.

There is no question but that the Sycamore Literary society put Topeka on the map. Many people in the United States thus heard of the town.

Elbert Hubbard, publisher of The Philistine of East Aurora, New York, once spoke in the Sycamore hall. Will you kindly check Topeka as you know it now with Elbert Hubbard's account in his magazine: "And so I went to Topeka, a town that has neither a saloon-keeper, gambler, drunkard, pauper, nor lawyer within its bailiwick. They have debates, music, spelling bees, and original papers on everything of human interest—and it is impossible for one to follow this even superficially without becoming an informed and distinguished person. If you know of another community or town with such a record for mental diligence as this, please name it." Speaking of the building, he called it a "little Greek temple, a church of this world."

In closing I should like to read just one letter:

"Dear Mr. Babcock:

Indeed I remember well my interview with you and Judge Penfield.

I am much interested in your account of the Sycamore Literary society, its history and its aims. It stands for human uplift, for the ambitions and hopes which make life happier, and the better worth living; and moreover it represents many societies which in the sum have done very, very much for our people. It is pleasant to think how it has grown and prospered in the thirty years since it began as a country debating society in the old school house at the four corners.

That it may live long in its beautiful new home, doing far reaching good to the boys and girls, the young men and maidens, the married men and women of the farm and village is my earnest hope."

This letter is dated May 16, 1907, and was written at the White House and is signed,

"Your friend,
Theodore Roosevelt."

Camp Homestead Lodge

An institution of distinction in LaGrange county is Camp Homestead Lodge, a boys' summer camp conducted annually at Wall lake in Greenfield township by Col. Robert W. Coe, head of the Junior Military Academy of Chicago. Excellent facilities are provided for some fifty or more Chicago lads who camp there each summer, with instruction and guidance of a full staff. Military discipline is observed.

Some Phases of Early History

First White Settlement

Lima township has the distinction of having been the site of the first white settlement in the county. The first families located there in 1828, and Mongoquinong was the first white village. Later the name was changed to Lima, and then to Howe. Before the whites settled at Mongoquinong the territory was populated and cultivated by the thriving Pottawatomie Indians, numbering several thousands.

The village of Mongoquinong was laid out in October, 1834. Two hundred eighty-six lots were laid out, and 84 of these were given to the county in consideration of having the county seat located there. In April of 1836 Samuel P. Williams laid out an addition to the north edge of the village. The addition comprised 24 blocks of ten lots each, two blocks of 16 lots each, and three blocks of 18 lots each. He also donated a block for a public square.

The first residents of the settlement were Benjamin Blair, Nathan Fowler, Jason Thurston, William Thrall and Jonathan Gardner, who located within the borders of the township in 1828. The following year brought many other families, among them being the families of Moses and Ica Rice, William Gardner, Arthur Burrows, Lemuel Fobes, John Hewett, John Kromer, Thomas Gale, John Gardner, Miles Bristol, ——— Horning, ——— Sinclair, Nathaniel Callahan, Frederick Hamilton, T. R. Wallace, David Smith, Daniel Fox, Almon Lawrence, Micajah Harding, Moses Price, Andrew Newhouse, Clark Classon, William Leverick, Daniel Davis, Lewis Switzer, William Adair, John Adams, John and Asa Olney, Nathan Jenks, John B. Howe, Christopher Cary, George Egnew, Oliver Classon, Nehemiah Coldren, Luther Newton, Elisha H. Shepard, Matthew Hall, Joshua T. Hobbs, Samuel P. Williams, John Jewett, Andrew Crawford, David Jewett, Cornelius Gilmore, Nathan Corwin, Robert Breckenridge, Stephen Corwin, George Latterar, William McCoy, Lorenzo Bull, Benjamin Corder, John C. Kinney, Robert Hamilton, William Hamilton, Jacob Sidener, Michael Riley, Jonathan Stephens, Sylvanus Halsey, E. A. Brown, Abbott Fleming, John Trask, Sydney Keith, John G. Lewis, Peter Miller, Samuel A. Howard, Jesse Ingraham, Hiram Harding, Daniel Harding, Enoch Layton, Joseph Leverage, Augustus Hewins, Seth Tucker, William Whitney, John Taylor, Thomas Lock, Ralph Herbert, Merriam Fox, Joseph Keir, William A. Mills, O. K. Shepard, Emilius Bartholomew, Richard Ferry, Joseph Kerr, T. J. Spaulding, L. P. Hutchinson, Jeremiah C. Robble, Isaac Wallace, William T. Codding, Robert B. Minturn and Dickinson Miller.

First Physicians

As the population of the county increased the need of a physician was realized, and there were a number of pioneer doctors whose names will be familiar to the older residents of the county.

Dr. Hill was the first in LaGrange county who claimed to be a physician. He came with the immigrants of 1828 or 1829. He professed to be a "regular" in practice, but having confidence in the flora of the woods, he confined himself to the simple remedies that he found in abundance around him. He is said to have filled his saddle-bags with roots and herbs without a cent of expenditure, to have traversed the country between St. Joseph in Michigan and Fort Wayne, Ind., remaining with the sick wherever he found them until they either recovered or died.

Dr. J. T. Hobbs came to the county in 1830, and Dr. Hill relinquished the field to him. Dr. Hobbs was a native of Maryland, a graduate of Bowdoin in Maine. He was elected the first clerk of LaGrange county, and his wife attended to the duties of this office in order to leave him free to attend to his medical practice. Dr. and Mrs. Hobbs left the county in 1850 and moved to Mount Vernon, O., and later to Sandusky, where he died.

In 1832 Dr. J. Bolton Smith came to Lima. Later another Dr. Smith came, and as he made much pretension to phrenology, he was distinguished from the first doctor as Dr. "Bump" Smith. Both were students of Dr. Duncomb of Canada.

The next doctor was Dr. Francis Jewett who came in 1834. He died in 1857. Dr. Weeks practiced in Lima from 1835 to 1837. Dr. Palmer came in 1838. Dr. Parry came in 1839. Dr. Fox practiced at Lima from 1836 to 1842. Other pioneer physicians were Dr. Holbrook, Dr. Thompson, Dr. George Fletcher, Dr. Pritchard and Dr. Reupert.

LaGrange's first physician was Dr. Brown, who settled here in 1842. He was a cousin of the celebrated John Brown of Harper's Ferry notoriety. He died in 1852, and was succeded in his practice by his brother-in-law, Dr. Butler. After Dr. Butler's death in 1854 Dr. J. P. Niman who had assisted him in his practice, succeeded him. Dr. Thompson came to LaGrange in 1856.

Mongo's first physicians were the Sheldon brothers, B. F. and William, who settled there, then known as Union Mills, in 1838.

Dr. George H. Dayton of Lima settled in Ontario in 1846.

Among the county's other pioneer physicians, of whom there were many, were Dr. Abner Lewis, Dr. J. H. Dancer, Dr. A. M. Spaulding, Drs. Toms and Grubs, Dr. Leonard Barber, Dr. E. M. Speed, Dr. Francis Griffith, Dr. E. G. White, Dr. J. H. Rerick, Dr. James Miller, Dr. A. Cutting, Dr. William Short, Dr. John Short, Dr. H. M. Casebeer, Dr. Charles H. Niman, Dr. Engle, Dr. Newton, G. Eno, Dr. William Hughes and Dr. C. D. Goodrich. These physicians all practiced in the county before 1879.

Early Pilgrims' Life

(By Homer H. Brown)

The church and school have been called the main pillars of civilization and in every established community may be found co-existent.

The early settlers of Springfield township enjoyed no religious privileges except such as were derived from an occasional wandering preacher. They would go miles through the forest to join each other in class and prayer meetings. In those days the Methodists met the Baptists and other denominations all on the one basis of Christian character and life. The circuit preacher of LaGrange found these and in 1838 a Methodist minister, Rev. G. M. Boyd, organized a society in the East Springfield vicinity. There were 14 charter members consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Conrad Deal, Mr. and Mrs. John Luckey, Mr. and Mrs. William Seaburn, Mr. and Mrs. William Herbert, Mr. and Mrs. N. B. Newnam, Mr. and Mrs. W. S. Newnam, and Mr. and Mrs. James Monroe. Many others later joined, including some of the Rawels, Wade, Spearo, Appleman, Miller, Talmage and other pioneer families.

There was also a Baptist society organized in the same vicinity at about the same time. Just who organized this society is not known at present. Rev. Prentiss H. Evans, who afterward became an early pastor of the Orland Baptist church, took a leading part in the organization of this society. Among the early members were Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Jones, Mr. and Mrs. Milo Jones, Mr. and Mrs. Jeremiah Greenfield and daughters, Mr. and Mrs. Russel Brown, Mr. and Mrs. E. O. Jakeway and others.

The meetings of these societies were held at the cabin homes of the members in winter, and in the summer in God's temple (out in the open). In 1842 the two societies, assessed by the general public, erected a small frame building on the side of the present church. The Talmalge brothers, Elisha and Henry, did the carpenter work. At the same time an acre of ground was bought of Elisha Talmage for burial purposes.

This building was used for school purposes during the week, and on Sundays by the two denominations alternately. Among the pioneer school teachers were Philo Nichols, Compton Bradford, James Monroe and L. H. Barr. Of the early Methodist ministers who preached in this building were Edd T. Conley, John Paul Jones and an Elder Morehouse. The early Baptist ministers were P. H. Evans, L. H. Stocker and C. H. Blanchard. This building was used for school and religious purposes until 1854 when the present church was erected. The old building was afterwards moved to the village of Applemanburg and is now a part of Ernest Forker's residence. The present building was built by both societies. The builder was Thomas C. Diller, who lived at that time in Applemanburg. The best of material was used, and the work was well done. This building was never used for school purposes. A schoolhouse was built at Applemanburg nearly at the same time.

For a few years the Methodists and Baptists used the present church. The latter began to languish and by 1860 the Methodists held full sway. This society has had its years of depression and its periods of financial embarrassment. Yet there is not another in the county that has clung to its constant exercises so well. In the year 1913 some improvements were made on the church. The building was raised some higher and a cement block wall put under it, a furnace, new cement steps, new seats and a vestibule were added. If the walls of the old church could speak they could tell of many incidents and scenes of joy and sorrow, times when people gathered to look at the pale faces of their dead for the last time on earth, and again when there were loud shouting and singing, and when some enthusiastic brother or sister got the power which was quite a common occurrence in those early days.

One who lived in those times once said to the writer, "I tell you those were great days. It seemed that the year of jubilee had come sure enough. It seems to me that the Lord does not come as near his people as He used to in the early days of LaGrange county."

The Phalanx

Although short lived, probably no other phase of LaGrange county history has been remembered as well as the old Phalanx.

The idea was originated by a group of Springfield township's prominent citizens in the year 1843. In 1844 a constitution of 30 articles was framed, and a charter was granted to William S. Prentiss, Benjamin Jones and Harvey Olmstead by the legislature. Soon Jesse Huntsman, Alanson Mason, William Anderson, John H. Sutler, Eliphalet Warner, L. H. Stocker, Prentiss H. Evans, William Sheldon, Dr. Richardson, Hart Hazen and Margaret Wade joined the group.

The Phalanx building was constructed 210 feet long and 24 feet wide, two stories high, and each floor had a front veranda. In the center of the first floor was a dining room 40x24 feet. Above the dining room was the large schoolroom.

All of the families, totaling around 120 people, lived together in the large Phalanx building. The industrial department was managed by the Council of Industry, who controlled, laid out, and directed all of the agricultural and mechanical departments, upon the basis of 75c per day of ten hours, and so ordered that ten hours of the man who plowed were paid the same as eight hours of the man who grubbed.

The Council of Commerce had under its supervision all the buying, selling and traffic of the Phalanx.

The Council of Education, made up of the best educational talent, had the entire management of the school and educational matters in the Phalanx. The several councils consisted of three or more members, of which the president was one. The different departments were sub-divided into groups of from three to eight persons, each group having its foreman, chosen by its members, who reported the time of each member to the secretary once every week, in days and hours.

The system had many advantages for the early pioneers. It made it far more economical for them, and it afforded them companionship. The adventurers who came only for the want of a home, and others who came for the winter only, were drawbacks to the system, and in 1847 or 1848 the Phalanx families scattered. William Seaburn and Ephriam Seeley settled the Phalanx affairs, having been commissioned to do so by the provisions of the constitution, in 1847 or 1848.

The Gage and Langdon War

The "Gage and Langdon War" or the "Mongo Massacre" during the earliest days of LaGrange county, although perpetrated as a joke, has its place in the annals of the county history and has been related hundreds of times as one of the amusing incidents of the pioneer days.

The pioneers in Springfield and Greenfield townships had been afraid of trouble with the Pottawatomie Indians, although the Redmen had given them no trouble, and constantly speculated on the possibility of war.

One day two settlers, Gage and Langdon, went to the mill in the northern part of Springfield township and while there they and the German miller discussed the possibilities of war with the Indians. Others joined in the conversation and before the day was over nearly everyone in the community had misgivings. Late that night, after Gage and Langdon had gone to bed, several other men at the mill decided to give them a real scare early the next morning. The group included a Frenchman, Dryreaur, the German miller, an Irishman, O'Ferrell, and a Yankee, Brownell, and several others who dressed themselves in Indian garb, painted their faces, armed themselves with tomahawks, rifles, etc., and concealed themselves behind trees. Soon Gage and Langdon appeared, and while they were standing in front of the mill talking with the miller, a large "Indian" suddenly appeared from behind a nearby tree, raised his rifle and fired. The miller, being "in on the joke," staggered, exclaimed, "My God! The Indians! I'm shot!" and fell to the ground, apparently dead. Several other "Indians" then leaped from their hiding places, brandishing tomahawks, and yelling at the two white men.

Panic stricken, Gage ran in one direction and Langdon in another, screaming at everyone they met that the Indians were on the warpath and had shot the German miller. People fled in all directions, gathering what few of their possessions they could carry.

When Gage reached the village of Lexington with his terrifying news the settlers there hid themselves in George Donaldson's blacksmith shop, and the men went to work with frantic speed cutting down trees for a fort. The families in the western part began the hasty erection of a fort near Cedar lake. Arming themselves with weapons of every description, the frightened white folks waited for the dreaded arrival of the Indians. Nothing happened. Another day came and went, and still no Indians arrived. Finally the scare died down, but it was not known until a long time afterward that the whole incident was nothing but a joke.

The Black Legs Period

By Homer H. Brown

During the early settlement the southern part of LaGrange county was overrun by a gang of lawless wretches who lived at the expense of the more thrifty enterprising citizens. Their stronghold nearest this county was at a place called the Tamarack just over in Noble county.

In this vicinity the dense and heavy forests furnished good advantages for hiding. Here they carried on their nefarious activities. In the making of counterfeit coin block tin, brass, zinc, copper and verdigris were used. They also became very proficient in the manufacture of banknotes.

This however was only one

branch of their business. Gambling, robbing and horse stealing were also in their line.

Several of the early settlers who undertook to check their villianous work were rewarded by the burning of their barns. Law seemed to be of no avail because there was no one to execute it. Notwithstanding the numerous efforts put forth to check their activities they grew in number and strength. Some of the settlers feared that they might eventually have rule.

Every allurement (easy money, bad women, liquor, etc.) was used to draw the young men into their ranks. Those who earned their living honestly and lived habits of true morality were looked upon with contempt. The principles of the Christian religion were derided and trompled on. The name given to this thieving band of land pirates by the law observing citizens was a justly deserved one—Black Legs.

It seems strange that the pioneers submitted to their depredations as long as they did, for it was not until 1852 that the Indiana state legislature came to the rescue. That year an act was passed authorizing the formation of companies for the purpose of ridding the country of these pirates. By this time the activities of the Black Legs extended over a considerable portion of northeastern Indiana.

On the 20th of September, 1856, a number of the citizens met at South Milford and organized the first company which was known as the LaGrange County Rangers. Within a year and a half over 30 other companies were formed in LaGrange and adjoining counties. These companies became known as the Regulators of Northeastern Indiana.

On January 16, 1858, the first public demonstration took place in Kendallville, when a full display of their forces was made. They later repaired to the common near the Baptist church where several speeches were made, setting forth the fixed determination of all who had enlisted in the cause of reform. On the next day, Jan. 17, nine arrests of the Black Legs were made at Rome City. Among those captured was the young and daring leader, McGregor McDougle.

Many others of the Black Legs were taken into custody. Some of these were subsequently released owing to lack of evidence. Such as were found guilty were given sentences of imprisonment.

A member of the gang, in his confession, stated that McDougle had committed murder. On this evidence he was sentenced to pay the penalty with his life. To the charge of murder McDougle pleaded innocence, but the citizens of that day who had suffered so long from the depredations of these pirates were worked up to that stage where they felt justified in making an example by hanging the leader.

The sentiment that prevailed among the greater number of the citizens seemed to be something like this: The axe is now laid at the root of the tree, and every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be hewen down.

On Jan. 26, 1858, McDougle paid the penalty for his misdeeds. The execution took place at Diamond lake in Noble county. In his confession he admitted stealing much property. That he really committed murder is a matter of doubt. In an old pioneer cemetery between Wolcottville and Rome City, marked by a marble slab, is all that it mortal of this young, misguided man. His death caused a most profound sensation all over northeast Indiana. It resulted in the breaking up of the Black Legs, and peace and prosperity reigned over this part of the state.

Newspapers

LaGrange county's first newspaper was the LaGrange Freeman, established in July of 1842 in Ontario, with Samuel Hemingway, Jr., as the editor. The newspaper was discontinued two years later, and the equipment was used in starting the LaGrange Whig, first published at Lima in 1845. James Castle was the Whig editor. In 1844 the People's Advocate was started in Ontario by James M. Flagg, an attorney. This paper was moved to Lima in 1845 and the name was changed to the LaGrange Advocate. Lima was then the county seat.

The LaGrange Advocate and the Lima Whig merged and continued until 1855. C. D. Y. Alexander then became editor and the paper soon was discontinued.

In October of 1845 the LaGrange Democrat was started by Messrs. Jewett, Owen and Bennett. This paper lasted five years.

LaGrange's first paper, after the county seat was moved to the village, was the Herald, established in 1856 by G. D. Stancliff, but it lasted only one year. John K. Morrow came from Bryan, Ohio, in 1856, bringing with him a large Washington hand press and material for a paper, and printed the first LaGrange Standard. This paper has been published continuously ever since.

The LaGrange Standard was the first Republican newspaper in the county, the political party having been organized the same year. Owners of the Standard in their order, were Mr. Morrow, Mr. Rayhouser, C. D. Y. Alexander, Joseph B. Wade, John D. Devor, Dr. Charles O. Myers, Thomas S. Taylor, Dr. John H. Rerick, John D. Devor, Dr. Rerick again, Carl H. Rerick and George C. Morgan who leased it together, Rowland H. Rerick, Mrs. R. H. Rerick, and Paul M. Riddick.

The LaGrange Democrat was established in 1859 by J. S. Castle. It was discontinued in 1862. In 1868 a joint stock company established another paper, the Democrat, with Francis Henry and Howard M. Coe as editors and publishers. The plant was destroyed by fire in April of 1869. A group of Democrats soon started another paper, which was published until 1870. The equipment was purchased by Hiram A. Sweet who started the LaGrange Independent. A. Bayliss bought an interest in the paper in 1872 but sold it back to Mr. Sweet the next year. Sweet moved to Sturgis in 1874.

In the spring of 1874 Arthur H. Wait of Sturgis started the Register in Wolcottville, but a few months later he sold the plant to James R. Rheubottom. S. D. Crane of LaGrange bought an interest in the Register, and in March of 1876 he bought the remaining interest and moved the plant to LaGrange and changed the name to the LaGrange Register. J. C. Hewett bought the Register a little later.

James R. Rheubottom established the Wolcottville Gazette in June, 1876. I. L. Lohman bought the office in 1878 and moved it to Rome City.

J. Frank Snyder, on Nov. 13, 1879, established the LaGrange Democrat, and later sold it to Henry O. Eldridge. Mr. Eldridge operated the office for a number of years then sold it to H. S. K. Bartholomew. The next owner was Harry R. Groat.

W. D. Rheubottom established the Saturday Call in 1892, and when he sold it to Mr. Eldridge the latter merged it with the Democrat and called the paper the Democrat Call.

LaGrange now has two newspapers, the LaGrange Standard and the LaGrange News, published by the LaGrange Publishing Company. Both are weeklies.

Topeka has the Topeka Journal, with C. W. Mattingly as the editor, and Wolcottville has the Wolcottville Herald, with Frank B. Plummer as editor.

These are the only four papers in the county.

Chronology of LaGrange County

1828. First white settlement, one-half mile west of Lima. Called Mongoquinong or Big Squaw Village. Nathan Fowler built cabin on banks of Crooked creek.

1829. Ica and Moses Rice built trading house at Lima. Jason Thurston, Jonathan Gardner and William Thrall settled at Lima. Nehemiah Coldren and Jesse Huntsman started first settlement in VanBuren. William Miller and Benjamin Jones settled in Greenfield.

1830. John B. Clark made first settlement in Springfield.

1831. First settlement in Newbury. Organization of Methodist Episcopal church at Lima. Construction of union mills at Mongo and sawmill at Lima.

1832. LaGrange and Elkhart counties separated. Lima and Greenfield townships organized. County seat located at Lima. First postoffice at George Egnew's home on Mongoquinong Prairie. Towns of Wolcottville and Lima platted. Anthony Nelson entered first land in Clearspring. Robert Latta and William McConnell settled in Eden. John B. Clark and Benjamin Jones first land purchases in Springfield. Defiance highway established. Haw Patch road surveyed.

1833. Sawmill built in Newbury. Jacob Butts first settler in Milford; David Hanson first settler in Bloomfield. Log school built near Lima. First courthouse built. Fort Wayne road established.

1834. Sawmills built in Ontario and VanBuren. Springfield township constituted. James B. Howe, first resident attorney, admitted to bar. County Bible society organized at Lima. Methodist church formed in VanBuren. Mill built near Shipshewana lake. Peter Lampman, John Adams, and Nelson Nichols entered land in Johnson.

1835. Village of Lexington platted. Bloomfield township organized. First school built in Milford. First settlement near Wolcottville. Buffalo & Mississippi railroad surveyed through county.

1836. Town of LaGrange platted. Organization of LaGrange Collegiate Institute. Stage line established to connect with boats at Constantine.

1837. Pottawatomie Indians removed from territory by government.

1838. Clay township organized. First school in Wolcottville.

1839. LaGrange Collegiate Institute opened. M. E. church formed in Wolcottville.

1840. Political campaign excitement. Religious revival at Pretty Prairie.

1841. Death of Chief Shipshewana.

1842. Newspaper, The LaGrange Freeman, established in Ontario as first newspaper in the county. Ontario woolen mills erected. Eden Chapel and Brushy Chapel built.

1843. Methodist and Presbyterion churches formed in LaGrange. Frame courthouse built in LaGrange. Grist mill opened in Ontario. Congregation of Saints organized at Lexington.

1844. The LaGrange Phalanx organized. County offices moved from Lima to LaGrange, new county seat. Newspaper, People's Advocate, established in Ontario. First Amish settlement in Newbury. C. B. Holmes appointed first postmaster in LaGrange.

1845. Newspapers, Lima Democrat and LaGrange Whig, founded. Large distillery established in Lima.

1846. Beginning of peppermint industry in county. First teachers' institute in Indiana, held in Ontario by Rufus Patch.

1847. County's first normal school.

1848. Fort Wayne plank road built. Odd Fellows order established in Lima.

1849. Masonic lodges organized in LaGrange and Lima. Large emigrations to California gold fields.

1850. First known underground railroad and station, used by escaping negro slaves, located in Milford township. Locust and mulberry trees planted in county.

1851. Wolcottville Seminary founded. Episcopal church founded in Lima. Sawmill started in Milford.

1852. Organization of county agricultural society. LaGrange county joined other nearby counties to break up horse thieving and counterfeiting gangs.

1853. Boyd grist mill opened in LaGrange. First county fair in LaGrange.

1854. S. P. Williams and John B. Howe formed bank in Lima. Lutheran church established in LaGrange. Ontario Congregational church dedicated. Amish church established at Haw Patch. County changes from Democratic to Whig.

1855. Ground broken for G. R. & I. railroad. LaGrange incorporated. Odd Fellows lodge formed in LaGrange.

1856. Herald, first newspaper in LaGrange, established. Methodist Episcopal church finished in LaGrange. South Milford platted.

1857. The LaGrange Standard established.

1859. Business block in LaGrange destroyed by fire. Newspaper, LaGrange Democrat, established.

1861. Fort Sumpter fired upon, April 14, and J. H. Hall, April 18, called for first volunteers for Civil war. J. H. Rerick, April 20, drew up enlistment paper, and May 21 LaGrange "Tigers" left for Indianapolis, captained by William Roy, to fight in Civil war.

1862. Soldiers drafted for Civil war.

1863. War raged, with many from LaGrange county wearing the Yankee uniform.

1864. LaGrange's quota in war troops was 191, and President Lincoln called for 300,000 more men. Lima branch bank destroyed by fire.

1865. Close of Civil war. President Lincoln assassinated. National Bank of Lima organized. Sycamore Literary Society organized.

1866. Soldiers return home. Subscriptions asked for building of the G. R. & I. railroad through county. Good Templars organized in county. County struck by hurricane on June 22.

1867. First postal money offices established in county. Work was begun on railroad. First baseball teams organized.

1868. First observance of Decoration Day in county.

1869. Six business blocks in LaGrange burned to ground at loss of $16,000.

1870. James R. Devor built first brick block in LaGrange. G. R. & I. railroad completed. Dunker church built at Haw Patch.

1871. Dr. David Rogers died, leaving large estate to be used for the benefit of the county's poor and homeless.

1872. Contract let for construction of new jail. Old settlers held convention.

1873. New jail finished. First postal cards issued to LaGrange county. Kerr's flour mill destroyed by fire. Wool growers' association formed in county. LaGrange Protective Association reorganized to cope with outlaws. First Granges of Patrons of Husbandry in county organized.

1876. Several join in gold rush to Black Hills. Midnight celebration in LaGrange for centennial year. LaGrange Light Guards organized. County commissioners grant licenses to saloon keepers in county.

1878. Cornerstone of new courthouse laid Aug. 15. Farmers Rescue Insurance Co. organized. First poultry show in LaGrange.

1879. LaGrange Democrat, newspaper, established. New courthouse opened in November. Silver dollars first began to circulate in county. First camp meeting in LaGrange.

1881. Cheese factory opened in LaGrange. Ontario flour mills and other buildings burned at loss of $10,000.

1882. County farm south of LaGrange sold at $7,500. United Brethren church opened in LaGrange. Contract let for new county infirmary. Semi-centennial celebration in Lima. Presbyterian church in LaGrange dedicated. Organization formed to fight drive well patents.

1883. "Standard time" introduced in county. John B. Howe's death. Tornado struck VanBuren township, causing $100,000 damage. County authorities accept new county infirmary.

1884. Destructive fire in LaGrange, destroyed buildings of Messrs. Will, Rose, McEntarier and Cutting. Slight earthquake felt here. Military school founded in Howe.

1885. Entire county snowbound; trains stopped by drifts. New St. Mark's Episcopal church in Lima dedicated. LaGrange Sentinel established. First street lamps in LaGrange. Lima Manufacturing Co. organized.

1886. Slack's wagon factory in LaGrange burned. Knights of Pythias lodge organized in LaGrange. Roller skating "fad" started.

1887. Religious revivals in LaGrange.

1888. Sons of Veterans organized in county. First farmers' institute held in LaGrange. Contract let in March for lighting LaGrange streets by electricity. Corner stone laid for Methodist church in LaGrange. First electric street lights in LaGrange Aug. 28. Folding chair factory established in LaGrange. Shipshewana platted.

1889. Lutheran and Methodists churches in LaGrange dedicated. Fire destroyed eight store buildings on east side of Detroit street, at loss of $10,000. Water-works project in LaGrange defeated at election, Wolcottville Water Association formed. Aid sent to Johnstown flood sufferers.

1890. Hotel Ruick opened in LaGrange. North side annexed to LaGrange. Leases on land in county taken for exploring for oil.

1891. Newspaper. The Globe, established in Wolcottville. LaGrange set courthouse clock on "standard time." New fair grounds bought. Building and Loan Association formed in LaGrange. LaGrange Fair Association incorporated for $10,000.

1899. Village of Hayward platted. Name changed to Stroh next year.

1893. Topeka platted.

1900. Stroh public school built.

1906. First Corn School, originated by Robert M. Waddell.

1911. LaGrange school remodeled and addition built.

1912. First library in LaGrange.

1916. City mail carrier service established in LaGrange.

1917. Carnegie library and city hall built in LaGrange. LaGrange county soldiers to World war.

1919. Influenza epidemic swept the nation. Armistice signed and World war ended.

1925. US-20 constructed through LaGrange county, east and west.

1926. Wainwright camp at Oliver lake is founded by J. W. Wainwright.

1934. Farmers State Bank formed in LaGrange.

1935. New water-work system installed in LaGrange.

1936. LaGrange celebrates her one hundredth anniversary.

TRANSPORTATION

The first railroad in the county was attempted in 1836-37 by the Buffalo & Mississippi Railroad Co., and the route was to be across northern Indiana.

The original north boundary of Indiana was about ten miles farther south than it is today.

LaGrange county subscribed $500 in stock and issued bonds for $2,000. The road never materialized.

An effort then was made to route the proposed Michigan Southern railroad through northern Indiana and across LaGrange county, but this project failed also. This company later built a line from Toledo to Elkhart, just south of LaGrange county. Twenty or more years passed with LaGrange county still minus a railroad. Travel and trucking were done by the horse and buggy or wagon method.

In 1855 interest in a railroad was revived again, and in 1870 the Grand Rapids & Indiana road was completed through the county. A land grant was given the road, and was renewed in 1863-64.

April 11, 1870, was a big day in LaGrange, for it was then that the first locomotive arrived in the town. Flags were hung out, the band played, the hotels served banquets for the track-layers and other railroad men. The road ran from Sturgis to LaGrange, and the next year it was completed from Sturgis to Grand Rapids.

Several other east and west roads were projected through the county, but most of them either never were built or else were short lived.

Three railroad lines pass through LaGrange county today, the Pennsylvania, the Wabash and a branch of the Lake Shore.

The Pennsylvania line runs north and south through Howe, LaGrange, Valentine and Wolcottville. The Wabash cuts through Topeka, Wolcottville and South Milford, and the Lake Shore, owned by the New York Central, passes through Shipshewana and Seybert, running from Goshen to Points in Michigan.

The St. Joseph Valley Railroad

The transportation story of LaGrange county is not complete without reference to the St. Joseph Valley Railroad, commonly known as the "Valley Line." H. E. Bucklen, well known Elkhart medicine manufacturer, became interested in railroading. Near the turn of the century he built an electric line from Elkhart to Bristol. His ambitions were not satisfied and he extended his railroad on to Middlebury and LaGrange about 1907 and later to Angola and on to Columbia, Ohio. His ambition was to build the line to Toledo and if he had lived no doubt would have accomplished this. Gasoline motor cars and locomotive drawn trains were operated through LaGrange and considerable business was done but after Mr. Bucklen's death, the enterprise lost its drive. Service here was discontinued in April of 1918 and the rails and other property were sold for scrap.

Bus Lines

One of the more modern modes of transportation, the motor bus, brings several bus lines through LaGrange and LaGrange county.

Large transcontinental buses use the national highway, US-20, coming through LaGrange, Plato and Brushy Prairie.

The Fort Wayne-Kalamazoo Bus Co. line runs north and south through the county, traveling on State Road 9 through Howe, LaGrange, Valentine and Wolcottville.

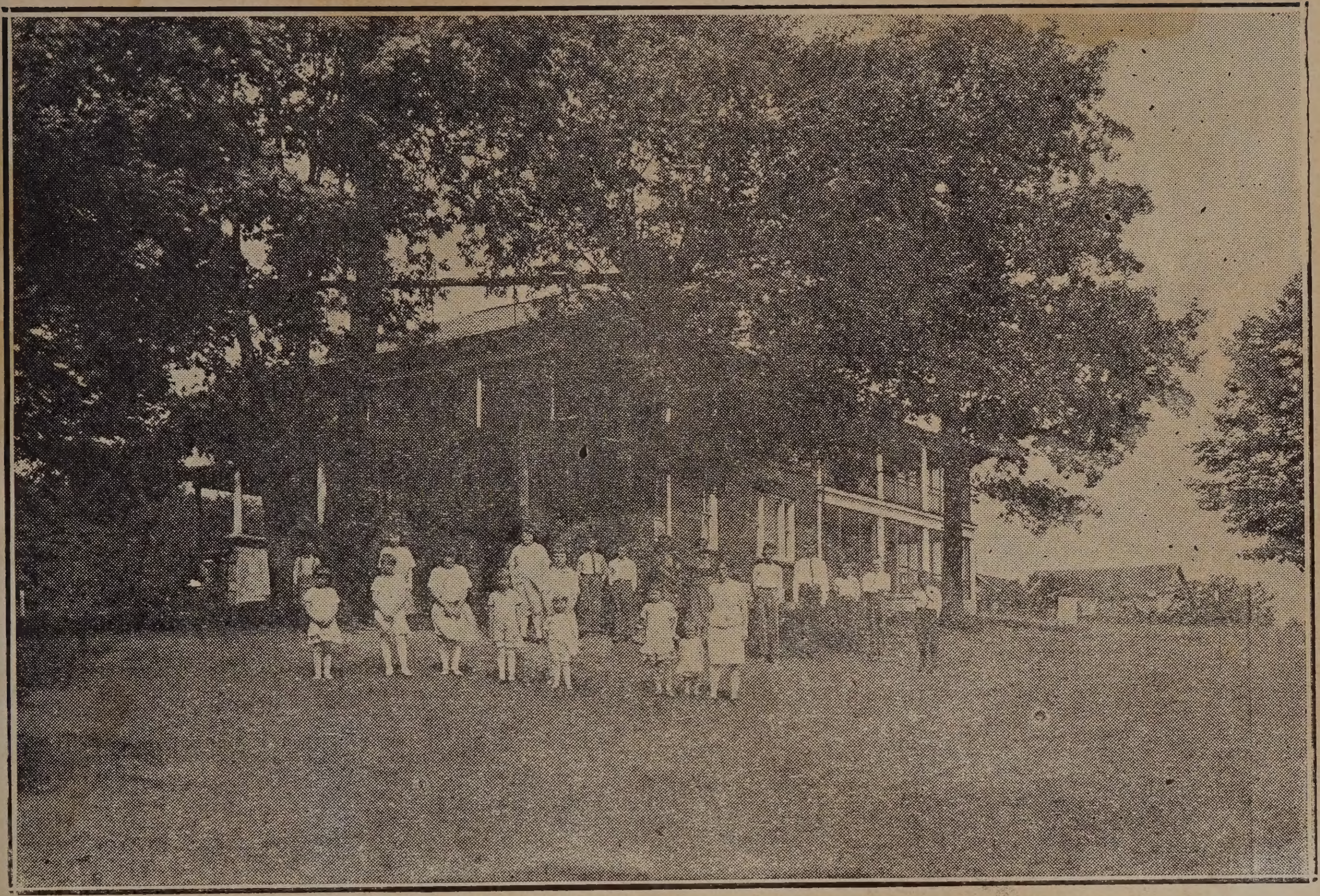
Airplanes

The most modern of all up-to-date transportation is, of course, the airplane, and several of the transcontinental lines have routes across LaGrange county. The huge liners of the air soar across LaGrange county all through the day and night, carrying their passengers from the Atlantic to the Pacific in less than 16 hours.

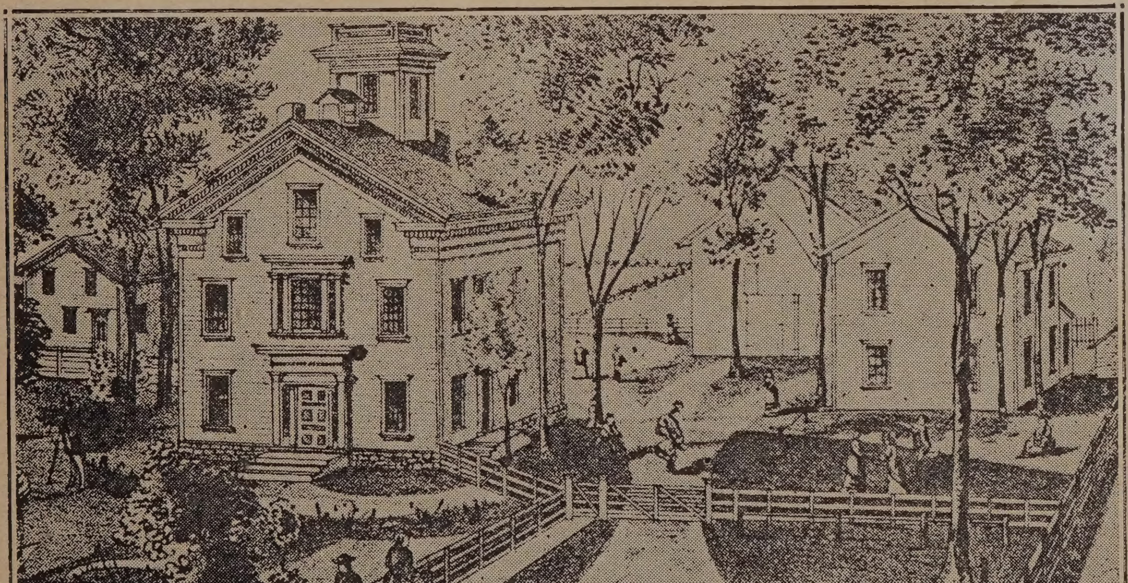
Lakes and Resorts

LaGrange county is unusually well blessed with lakes and hundreds of people are attracted to the county during the summer months.

Oliver lake, North Twin, South Twin, Cedar, Wall, Fish, Shipshewana, Royer, Olin, Big Long, Lake-of-the-Woods, Pretty, Long, Adam's Cline, Stone and Appleman lakes are only a few of the several dozen bodies of fresh water located within the boundaries of LaGrange county. Several of the lakes have been built up into well known summer resorts, with beautiful and modern cottages, stores, and beach facilities.



ROGERS ORPHANS HOME



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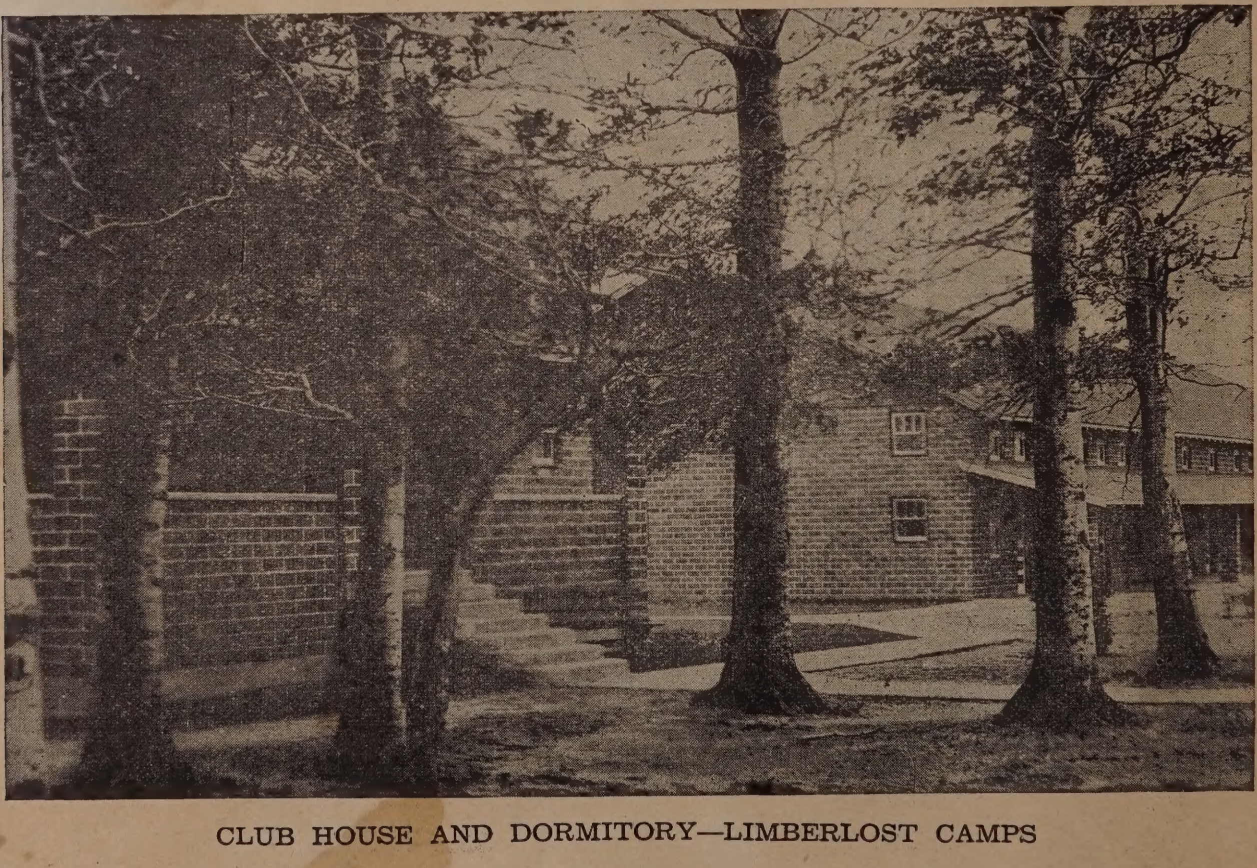

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